Inquire.Collaborate.Explore.2 - April 22, 2013

Our First Unconference was attended by over 250 teachers, some CEAs and a few administrators. It was day focused on professional conversations and collaboration.
1. CALL TO ORDER
   1.1 Adoption of Agenda

2. APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS

3. SECRETARY'S REPORT
   3.1 Minutes of VTA - AGM May 14, 2012

4. TREASURER’S REPORT
   4.1 The proposed budget for 2013-2014 is printed as part of the Annual Report.
   4.2 The following motions are recommended by the VTA Staff Rep Assembly:
       Motion: that the VTA fee for the 2013-2014 remain the same at $465.00/annum for active members and;
       Motion: that the VTA fee for Teachers-on-Call remain at 0.5% of their gross salary for 2013-14

5. LEADERSHIP REMARKS
   5.1 Message from VTA President - Kevin Bader
   5.2 Message from Incoming VTA President - Heather Malcolm

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
   6.1 Elections
       6.1.1 President - BY VOTE
           Heather Malcolm

6.1.2 First Vice President
6.1.3 Second Vice President
6.1.4 Secretary
6.1.5 Treasurer
6.1.6 Local Association Representative
6.1.7 Bargaining Chair
6.1.8 Professional Development Chair
6.1.9 Social Justice Reps (2)
6.1.10 Public Relations/Communications
6.1.11 OH & S Chair
6.1.12 Local Aboriginal Education Contact
6.1.13 Members at Large (3)

7. EXECUTIVE REPORTS
   7.1 Executive Reports form part of the written annual report distributed to the members present.
      Motion: That the reports be accepted as printed.

8. NEW BUSINESS
   8.1

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS
   Door Prize Draw
   Retirement & Year End Barbeque: June 27, 2013
   3:30 pm - 7:00 pm, Paddlewheel Park Hall.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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VTA 2013 Year End/Retirement Barbeque

We’d love to see you there!!

Thursday, - June 27 - 3:30 pm at Paddlewheel Hall
Burgers, Fruit/Veggie Platters, Snack and Drinks Provided
Bar Drinks - $3, Cab Fare Available, Plan Ahead!

Your Host School this Year is Coldstream Elementary
1. CALL TO ORDER
   1.1 Adoption of Agenda (O'Brien/McMahon/Carried)

2. APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS
   2.1 Motion: To appoint Janet Townsend, Lana O'Brien and Emily Fraser (Carried)

3. SECRETARY'S REPORT
   3.1 Minutes of VTA - AGM May 18, 2011
   Motion to accept the May 18, 2011 Minutes (Stewart/MacDougall/Carried)

4. TREASURER’S REPORT
   4.1 The proposed budget for 2012-2013 is printed as part of the Annual Report.
   Q: Why do we have a deficit budget? It is not in our constitution. We are in a 3-year cycle.
   4.2 The following motions are recommended by the VTA Staff Rep Assembly:
   Motion: that the VTA fee for the 2012-2013 remain the same at $465.00/annum for active (Ladner/Leverman/Carried) members and;
   Motion: that the VTA fee for Teachers-on-Call remain at 0.5% of their gross salary for 2012-13 (Elstone/Raphael/Carried)

5. LEADERSHIP REMARKS
   5.1 Message from BCTF Executive - Kip Wood – Motion: Move into committee (Malcom/Janz/Carried) Motion: Move out committee: (Jantz/Carried) Discussed Bargaining.
   5.2 Message from VTA President - Bruce Cummings. Discussed history of teaching and the BCTF/VTA. Good byes to outgoing Executive members.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
   6.1 Elections
   6.1.1 President - Acclaimed: Kevin Bader
   6.1.2 First Vice President – Acclaimed: Heather Malcolm
   6.1.3 Second Vice President – Vacant
   6.1.4 Secretary - Acclaimed: Diane Bennet
   6.1.5 Treasurer - Vacant
   6.1.6 Local Association Representative – Acclaimed: Richard Santos
   6.1.7 Bargaining Chair – Acclaimed: Craig Leverman
   6.1.8 Professional Development Chair – Acclaimed: Robyn Ladner
   6.1.9 Social Justice Reps (2) – Acclaimed: Nancy Ingersoll, Emily Fraser
   6.1.10 Public Relations/Communications - Vacant
   6.1.11 OH & S Chair – Acclaimed: Eli Silver
   6.1.12 Local Aboriginal Education Contact - Vacant
   6.1.13 Members at Large (3) – Acclaimed: Katie Oakes, Candice McMahon and Darryl Wiebe

7. EXECUTIVE REPORTS
   7.1 Executive Reports form part of the written an annual report distributed to the members present. Motion: That the reports be accepted as printed. (Malcom/Johanson/Carried)

8. NEW BUSINESS
   8.1 Constitution Amendment (see page no. 13) (Dorval/Yanoffski) (Santos/Malcolm) Amendment – Change advance voting: VTA President only (Carried)

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS as per Agenda
   Door Prize Draw – Katie Oakes won $50 Gift Certificate to Original Joe’s.
   Retirement & Year End Barbeque: June 28, 2012 3:30 pm - 7:00 pm, Paddlewheel Park Hall.

10. ADJOURNMENT Motion to Adjourn: (Jantz/Santos/Carried)
## Vernon Teachers' Association

### Proposed Budget for 2013 - 2014

#### Revenue

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership Revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>AO ProD Conf Fees</td>
<td>190.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD Funds</td>
<td>88,650.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCTF General Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCTF Rep Training/Pro D Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCTF Grants (Other)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD#22 PQT Grant Funds</td>
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<td>Interest Revenue</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
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<td>Transfer fr Investments</td>
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<td>Other Income</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
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#### Meeting Expenses

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<td>Executive Meetings</td>
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<td>Rep Assembly &amp; General Meetings</td>
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<td>Zone Meetings</td>
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<td>Staff Rep Training Mtng Exp</td>
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<td>Pro D RepTraining Mtng Exp</td>
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<td><strong>Total Meeting Expenses</strong></td>
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#### General Operating Expenses

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<td>Sunshine Committee</td>
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<td>Pro D Convention</td>
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<td>Pro D Mentorship Program</td>
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<td>Scholarships/Bursaries</td>
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<td>Induction</td>
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<td>Base to School Social</td>
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<td>Total Member Programs/Initiatives</td>
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<td>Labour Support Contributions</td>
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<td>BCTF Initiatives</td>
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<td>OCTAV PD Contribution</td>
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<td>Lab of Labour Conven/Winter School</td>
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<td>BCTF AGM</td>
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<td><strong>Total Labour Support &amp; Partnerships</strong></td>
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#### General & Admin Expenses

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<tr>
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<td><strong>Total Current Year Reserves Contrib</strong></td>
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#### Wages & Benefits

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<td>Pro D Chair Release Time</td>
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<td><strong>Total Wages &amp; Benefits</strong></td>
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#### PD Funds Distributed

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total PD Funds Distributed</strong></td>
<td><strong>88,650.00</strong></td>
</tr>
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#### Net Income

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>(2,510.00)</strong></td>
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We began this school year in a strange "place", in the shadow of our job action. Though many teachers were able to maintain and/or rebuild positive working relationships with their admin, others have found it more of a struggle. Our district has tried to keep class sizes below 30, but official guidelines for class composition are now a thing of the past. Many classes teetered on the edge of unteachable, and our colleagues carried the extra burden.

Yet there was business to be done. You'll recall the first week back when we met at the Rec Center to discuss the new provincial language and we voted to switch to the standardized extended health benefits plan. Here's a recap of some other big items through the year...

**Member Wellness**
This theme has been of paramount concern to me from day one of assuming this new role. Last year’s provincial, local, and school-based challenges exhausted many of us. That spirit, combined with the additional pressures in our classes, manifested itself in unprecedented numbers of us requiring support. For the first time in a long time, we ran a 6-session Living with Balance program. Not only did we have enough teachers sign up to meet the quota, we filled the spots! Sick days were up 25% in the first part of year; and that's keeping in mind that too many of us refuse to call in sick when we should!

I have been able to work with four wise, empathetic, and professional rehab consultants through our Health and Wellness program. Those teachers who have utilized their assistance understand the value of our dues facilitating this important member support.

**Local Bargaining**
Our local bargaining team has been working hard at developing objectives and writing language proposals for the negotiating team to bring to management.

**Our Message**
Despite our struggles in the current public ed system -- disrespect and underfunding -- I have tried to emphasize our positive messaging to the public. Media interviews and photo ops, letters and phone calls to the Trustees, attending and asking questions at the public board meetings, and supporting local initiatives have all combined with the daily outstanding work we do with students to promote our message: I love Teaching.

**Climate Survey**
Though the "idea" officially got going this year, it's been a long time coming. Rumblings eventually sparked a membership-wide survey, and teachers were free to express their opinions and experiences relating to the climate in our school district.

We analyzed and presented the results back to the membership through school visits. Powerful. At the very least, teachers said they felt validated “to know we weren’t the only ones feeling this way.” We also merged relevant information into the superintendent selection process, and presented to senior management just a few days ago.

I think the presentation is an effective conversation starter; I trust the new management team will be willing to work together towards some positive changes in terms of how we relate to, communicate with, and understand each other as part of the same team.

**District 22 Budget**
The news of a 2.2 million dollar shortfall was not a surprise due to the trend of declining enrolment.
However, the shock of a disproportionate and unprecedented cut of 19 teaching FTE is overwhelming. And declining enrolment only accounts for about half of that amount; we are also paying for the increased costs of running the district. Elementary schools have been told they’re losing divisions, which means classes will be maxed regardless of composition factors. Secondary schools are losing teachers and losing programs that have run successfully for 20 years. Projections show total enrolment decline will soon level off and student numbers will start increasing again by 2019.

**LIF Fund**
These meetings were some of my first with the superintendent. Though I expressed concerns with the overall process by which it’s allocated (schools competing against each other for extra money) and with the feeble amount of the fund -- certainly not a sufficient remedy for our court victory regarding stripped language -- I worked to ensure the voices of teachers in the principals’ reports were properly represented in the final dollar amounts and distribution of supports.

**SIP**
This is a great example of how the voice of one teacher can spark a significant collective improvement. Now, all LTTOCs and/or TTOCs who work 20 days or more in the same assignment participate in SIP. If these members exhaust their sick days, they now have some financial security under our SIP plan!

**Thank You**
I am very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with such a dedicated group of professionals, Vernon Teachers. Alana, our office manager, has been a constant source of valuable assistance and I’m so thankful for sharing the office with her each day. Members of our Executive, School Staff Reps, and the countless individual members have helped me grow as a professional by providing encouragement, advice, and guidance.

I knew heading in that I would make use good of disclaimers such as, “I’m new at this, but I’ll find out the answer and get back to you.” Every teacher has been patient, understanding, and thankful -- no surprise mind you...it’s what we do!

Though this role has many layers of responsibility, my priority has been supporting individual members through times of professional, personal, and financial challenges. It is a responsibility I have taken very seriously, and it has been an honour to have been entrusted with serving you through the many confidential conversations and meetings. I’m returning to the classroom knowing I’ve helped some people.

In solidarity,

**Kevin**

**1st VICE PRESIDENT – Heather Malcolm**

I have had the pleasure of chairing all the meetings this year for the Executive Council, RAs and the general meetings of our members. It can be challenging to keep a group of teachers on topic. I thank all of the staff reps and the other members of the executive for the hard work that they put in this year.

Activities that I have undertaken this year included attending the Summer Conference in August in Kamloops, the FLI (Federation Leadership Institute) in Vancouver in September, and the AGM in March in Vancouver. I sat as your representative on the Calendar committee this year. I am also a member of the Bargaining Committee. I also had an opportunity to visit many schools and share the Climate Survey that the VTA did. It was another busy year.

Another activity that I undertook was that of Local Election Contact. We worked hard to get people out to vote in the provincial election (which happens to be May 14). At the time that I wrote this report, I had sent 5 questions to each candidate and hopefully, by May 13, this AGM, you will have seen their answers. As well, I am looking into advertisements to encourage people to vote and to make public education a vote determining issue. Thanks to Candice McMahon, Bruce Cummings and Lisa LaBoucane for their help.

**Heather**
The start of this school year was difficult for us all, following the conditions of last year’s job action, and consequently the executive spent many long hours discussing the wellness and morale of our local teachers. In looking back at this challenge, I want to acknowledge the executive for their continued energy, and their dedication to our membership. There were times when we looked around the room for the solutions to problems that we knew couldn’t be solved in the short-term, such as class size and composition issues, and funding shortages. Despite this, your VTA executive continues to use their voices to stand up and talk to government leaders, our district staff and our Board of Trustees. I have no choice but to believe that we will be heard.

This year, as 2nd Vice President, I was responsible for chairing the Sunshine Fund/Community Resources Fund Committees. I am proud to say that we have been able to provide financial support to several members who have faced difficult family and medical situations. It is remarkable to be able to offer such assistance to our colleagues. I am also proud to report that the Community Resources Fund continues its financial support for families and youth through various non-profit organizations. We have made significant donations to the Salvation Army Food Bank, Together for Christmas, Teens Count Too, Coldest Night (Upper Room Mission), Youth Rowing, Support of Sport, Unplug and Play week, the Kindergarten Book Program, Mackie House, Greater Vernon Museum, and Junction Literacy... to name a few (and, as of this report, we aren’t finished with this year’s donations).

Also, as 2nd Vice President, I have been able to support the work of the President and the Executive in various ways throughout the year. With my experience and role as a Resource Teacher, I contribute knowledge of provincial Special Education designations, district support levels, and the challenges faced in these specialized roles. I was able to bring this to the table when Kevin and I met with the NDP Labour Critic, Robin Austin. I have also supported individual members in meetings with administration, and worked on several “ad hoc” committees. Our executive continues to work on improving communication between teachers and our Board, and we are not yet finished pursuing many of our ideas. I hope that our work on this year’s “Climate Committee” (re: climate survey and resulting data) will bring about important and lasting changes for teachers in this school district. In February, I was able to attend a week long course (“Facing Management”) at the Canadian Labour Congress Winter School. This was excellent experience, and I learned a great deal about our Union’s affiliation with the BC Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress. This spring, once again, I have joined our local Bargaining Committee, and I am committed to achieving improvements in our outdated Collective Agreement.

In closing, I would like to thank the continuing staff reps and executive members, and especially would like to acknowledge those who are new to the table. It is wonderful to have new voices to contribute and challenge ideas. Finally, I would like to express a deep appreciation for Kevin’s leadership this year - he has provided exceptional support to colleagues during difficult times. Kevin is a generous, hard-working, creative and dedicated person- and a wonderful teacher, and I wish him well in the classroom next year.

Lisa

TREASURER - Candice McMahon

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year back on the Executive, after a long hiatus: the best part being the collegiality and professionalism exhibited at our Representative Assembly and Executive Meetings. Some amazingly insightful people represent Vernon teachers, and it is wonderful to be a part of healthy debate and discussion.
Our Office Manager, Alana Pethick, has been an invaluable mentor with all aspects of our accounting, and I thank her profusely for taking the time to explain the ins and outs (literally) so clearly.

The 2013–2014 budget is provided in your AGM information packet. We are now off of the budgetary cycle of three years. In previous years, that would mean that our union dues would have had to increase last year, and we would begin a new cycle. However, last year’s Executive members anticipated the drop in the number of teachers employed by our school district, the lack of increase in teacher salaries, and they took seriously to the task of trimming our VTA operating expenses to avoid increasing members’ dues.

I am pleased to announce that even though we are anticipating a budgetary shortfall next year, our investments will easily handle this deficit, and our members’ fees will once again remain unchanged (four years in a row). 😊

Good for our budget was the increase in revenue due to the unexpected increase in teacher sick days (this brings in revenue, as TOC dues are paid as a percentage of earnings). However, your VTA Executive is very concerned by this clear indication of a decline in our membership’s wellness. Kevin Bader, who has been just an outstanding President for us, has been telling us all year to strive for a balance between work life and home life. Please, truly strive to achieve this balance. We must stop trying to piece or hold together a severely underfunded educational system; this endeavour is seriously hurting our members’ health.

Lastly, we are finally in a position of fiscal health where we can begin to make annual lump payments (10% of the principle) on our mortgage. We anticipate being able to continue this trend over the next few years, which will finish off our mortgage debt much quicker and save us a lot of money that would have been "wasted" on interest payments.

Candice

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Robyn Ladner

It has been my pleasure to once again, represent the teachers of Vernon in the area of professional development.

Teacher Inquiry

The VTA and SD 22 jointly created an $8000 grant to support Teacher Inquiry. Eight groups of teachers received funds that allowed them to meet and work together on various Inquiry projects. These groups came together for an orientation session in January and have continued their work since culminating in an Inquiry celebration and sharing session in mid June.

In addition, Vernon is part of a pilot project that includes the other Okanagan locals in creating a sustainable model in the valley for Teacher Inquiry. Through the BCTF we have trained 4 facilitators to work with groups in Vernon and the VTA Executive has approved a yearly $3500 grant in the coming budget to support Teacher Inquiry.

I will be giving a presentation to administrators on April 25th about the power and value of Teacher Inquiry.

I would especially like to acknowledge the members of my teacher inquiry group (Jill McDonald, Emily Fraser, Paul Britton, Melissa Hayhurst, and Nathan Lee). We’ve been working together for 3 years and still going strong. Your intelligence, creativity and our true collaboration have really helped me as a professional and improved PD in Vernon.

It is my goal to continue to support, encourage, and facilitate Inquiry as a framework for PD.

VTA Okanagan Zone Convention

Teachers were offered high quality sessions with multiple keynote speakers: Sandra Herbst, Barry MacDonald, and Ann Davies, as well as many workshop choices at George Elliot High School in Lake Country on the February 19, 2013 Zone Convention.
conference day. It was attended by over 800 teachers. This conference is 100% teacher planned and funded. I collaborate closely with the PD chair from Kelowna to put that day together. Candy Parmenter, comedienne and motivational speaker is already booked as our keynote speaker for next year!

Inquire. Collaborate. Explore. 2
April 22nd was a great success. I’d like to thank all the teachers who continue to step up and out of the traditional conference box. It made this day meaningful, relevant and valuable. Teachers know best what they need for PD at every stage and assignment in their career. We never have enough time to talk and make new connections. When we do, it improves our practice and student learning. Professional learning is a dynamic and career long process of learning and this day was an example of how that can look. Look for I.C.E.3 coming next January :)

District Pro D Committee
The District PD Committee continues to meet three to four times per year to set goals, direction and policy for Professional Development in the district. I want to thank Paul Britton, Jill McDonald, Lisa Laboucane, Shay Best, Sascha Burmeister, Lynda Henney, Joe Rogers, Linda Spiller, and Rita Tedesco for their commitment and support.

Thank you
I want to thank all the people who have helped with Professional Development throughout the year: the School PD reps, the teachers who suggested or put on workshops and collaborative sessions, LSAs, and the members of the District Pro D committee.

A special thank you goes to Alana Pethick (VTA Office Administrator), Kevin Bader, and the VTA Executive for their support and guidance throughout this past year.

I also want to thank you, the teachers of Vernon. Your commitment and passion for protecting professionalism and autonomy is what keeps me going.

I especially want to thank my husband Eric, whose support makes all my work with the VTA possible. I hope to be back next year to continue this work and create effective, autonomous, and powerful Pro D experiences for all of us.

Robyn

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY -
Eli Silver and Nancy Ingersoll

This is my fourth and final year as the Occupational Health and Safety member of the VTA executive and one of two official VTA representatives on the District Joint Occupational Health and Safety committee (DJOH&S) and my sixth year as a committee member and co-chair. I am taking a step back from my work with health and safety as my wife returns to school after eight years at home with our children.

Nancy Ingersoll, Kevin Bader and I continued to act as your representatives at the district level with regards to teacher health and safety.

The first district training session in October covered reporting procedures using the districts online reporting forms. Administrators were asked to bring their laptops to the training session so that school based committees (SBCs) could work through accident/incident scenarios as a team. SBCs were also given a template for their terms of reference and some time to start finalizing them.

Reminder that any staff member may access OH&S forms and information at anytime by going to the sd22 or Worksafe BC website.
SD22 Staff login
User name = sd22
Pass word = forms4me
Then look under the heading OH&S for a list of forms and information.
The second half day OH&S training session in December was on ergonomics. We had a guest physiotherapist review ergonomic best practices for the workplace. We also reviewed WCB work orders from the previous year. Specific case studies of school district orders were discussed to avoid similar issues in our district.

The DJOHS committee noticed a marked increase in the number of schools reporting OH&S safety minutes and site inspections as required by law. This is a positive step forward in ensuring that all sites are safe for workers and students.

If you have questions or concerns about health and safety issues please contact a member of your site-based OH&S committee. If they can’t answer your question(s), feel free to contact Nancy Ingersoll or myself at anytime.

Yours in health and safety,

Eli

BARGAINING - Craig Leverman

I will start by thanking the volunteers and Executive members who are serving on the Bargaining Committee. These individuals have spent numerous evenings, from 4 until 8, or later, reviewing, discussing and writing language so that the Bargaining Team is prepared for each and every session at the Table.

Your Bargaining Committee is:
Andrew Affleck, Kevin Bader, Chris Brandle, Sasha Burmiester, Emily Fraser, Nancy Ingersol, Lisa LaBoucane, Robyn Ladner, Craig Leverman, Heather Malcolm, Richard Santos, and Glen Stiven. Representing your interests at the Table are: Andrew Affleck, Kevin Bader and myself.

The team has prepared language on 25 items. We are working through each one with the employer at the table. You can follow our progress via Our Side of the Table, which can be found on the VTA website or on our Facebook page. As well, VTA web page has a link to the BCTF Member Portal, where you can keep informed of the developments at the Provincial table.

As many of you know, this round of local bargaining has been more successful. We achieved a Protocol Agreement and have agreed in principle on several items. We have 6 more sessions with the Management Team, in which we will be discussing a number of significant issues, such as Post and Fill, Transfers, Layoff and Recall and Personnel Files.

Thank you for your continued support as we move forward in improving the working conditions of teachers.

Craig

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE - Richard Santos

This is my second year as the Local Representative (LR) for the BCTF to the Vernon Teacher’s association, Local 22. This year has been quieter in terms of intensity and challenges after last year’s job action. The BCTF this past year has focused on the upcoming election working to make education in BC a crucial issue.

The BCTF has also focused a great deal of its time on money matters. Over the last number of years the BCTF has, unfortunately, run a number of deficit budgets due to the numerous court cases that were launched to fight the Liberal government in its assault on our rights and on public education. The BCTF is aware of the problem and has already implemented some budget cuts and continues to look at other possible areas where money can be saved. Having said that please be aware that we, the BCTF, are in good financial shape.
During this year I have worked to become more aware of the collective agreement. I would urge all members to read the agreement. Know your rights. It is easily accessible online through the VTA website. In that vein I have been working over the last month with the bargaining committee preparing our local’s package to present to the district. I believe we have a good opportunity to start a new dialogue with our employer and to further strengthen our contract.

At the end of May, I will be attending another Representative Area (RA) meeting in Vancouver. This will be the last RA for the year and the last one that the current BCTF President, Susan Lambert, will attend as president. She has finished her term, and next year Jim Iker, the current first vice president, will be the new president. I do not agree with all of Jim Iker’s views; however, I do believe he will do an excellent job as the BCTF president.

Being the LR for Vernon is a privilege. Those of you who know me are aware that my interest is in doing what is best for the membership. The position requires a certain amount of time and an open mind. I strive to listen to other views and to take into consideration what is best for Local 22. I have worked this year to cut the budget at the BCTF and have voted for the budget cuts that I believe are best for all members. As always please feel free to contact me at anytime with questions about the BCTF. Thank you.

Richard

Social Justice Report - Nancy Ingersoll and Emily Fraser

Emily Fraser and Nancy Ingersoll have been your Social Justice contacts this year again and want to thank the rest of the Executive and Alana for their help and support. We attend the executive and RA meetings each month and also sit on the Community Resource committee. I attend the community Suicide Prevention Committee meetings on your behalf as well.

We want to thank each of the school reps for taking on the task of receiving the SJ e-mails & trying their best to distribute them to their colleagues. That is an undertaking in itself and we really appreciate the time involved. Hopefully, there was something there to catch the passion of everyone. We offered a training for SJ Reps on LGBTQ issues and a general review of Social Justice, Social Service and Social Responsibility. Thank you to those who were able to attend.

We submitted the information for the LGBTQ policy to the Board Office and are still hoping that they will approve it before the end of the year. There are many districts across the province who have these policies in place and are making schools a little safer for these vulnerable students and staff. Please address these issues with your students and with Board members whenever you can.

Thank you to all of you who keep social justice issues in front of your students; this is the only way to ensure a fair and equitable society. Giving them the skills to ensure they have a voice to advocate for themselves and to encourage others in solidarity action is critical to their future.

Thank you for all your support,

Nancy / Emily

OCTAV - Sascha Burmeister

Having the opportunity this year to undertake the position with OCTAV has been an enlightening and informative experience. Over the past year I have attended two local zones meetings, as well as the BCTF summer conference in Kamloops.

All of these experiences have proven to be informative and positive in regards to the
discussion of pertinent issues, and thus the
distribution of information towards our local
TTOC community. Throughout this year I have
had some local issues arise with some of our
members and through positive communication we
have made a concerted effort to resolve those
issues.

My goal for this last year was to learn about the
role of our Union as well as the role of my
position. It is my hope that I have kept the
TTOC members informed and involved in the cur-
rent issues, as well as to relieve any concerns
that we may have. My goal for next year is to
provide the members with concise information,
and opportunities to share our concerns and
gather in a
forum that is conducive to all of our time and
efforts.

I have very much appreciated the help and
patience of my fellow VTA Executive members,
and the guidance that they have afforded me.
Furthermore, I would like to thank the TTOC
community for the opportunity to represent our
concerns on an Executive level.

Sascha

SECRETARY - Diane Bennet

Once again we are drawing to the end of a very
busy year. Thanks to Kevin Bader, the Executive,
the Representative Assembly and Alana Pethick
for being such a strong and supportive team. Be-
cause of the current political climate it has not
always been easy to maintain a positive attitude.
As well, the future holds many uncertainties. It
is important we stand together and keep fighting
for what is good for students as well as teachers
and support staff. Get involved in any way you
can. Be supportive of each other. Together we
will be successful. We are professionals and de-
serve to be treated as such.

Diane

MEMBER AT LARGE - Karen Vance

This was my first year on the VTA executive
and it has truly been a learning experience that
I would recommend to any member who wants to
know the inner workings of the VTA. I’ve
listened, learned and felt I made some
contributions. I’ve volunteered to be a member
of the VTA’s Sunshine Fund Committee as well
as the Hardship Fund Committee. I know that
this upcoming year will be one of negotiation
both locally and provincially. Hopefully, the
court decision regarding teacher’s rights to
bargain working and learning conditions will
finally be handed down.

I look forward to working with the VTA in the
upcoming year in whatever capacity in which I
am qualified. Many thanks to the members of
the VTA for voting me in to serve this past year
on the VTA executive.

Karen

MEMBER AT LARGE - Darryl Wiebe

As a member at large I have been able to listen
and learn from our fine executive members the
ins and outs of our contract. Although my role
as a member at large is limited and my own life
has been turned upside down I was still
able give my input to the many discussions and
tough decisions that the executive deal with at
their meetings. I find it very interesting to
listen to all their points of view and how they
come to agreement in all situations. I would like
to acknowledge all the hard work and dedication
that our VTA executive has demonstrated over
the past year. These members are a true indica-
tion of the old saying "If you want something
done, Give it to a busy person." Thank you for
the support.

Darryl
ATTENTION: 2012/2013 RETIREES

We are compiling the 2012/2013 Retirees Profiles for insertion in the June ‘Voices’ and we need your help to ensure that we don’t miss anyone. If you are retiring, and have not yet done so, please complete a ‘Retiree Profile’ (you can download a form from the VTA website: www.vernonta.com or contact the VTA office to have one emailed to you) and fax, email or send it (via school mail bag) to the VTA as soon as possible along with a jpg photo. Thank you!