

Vernon Teachers' Association

VOICES

Volume 57

April 2011

4004-31st Street, Vernon B.C. V1T 5J6

Ph: 542-0456/Fax: 542-0564

www.vernonta.com

Bargaining for our Future

Bargaining for our Future

The goal for everyone is to have a signed collective agreement by June 30, 2011 because the current CA expires then. What happens if it isn't signed? Not to worry: the current CA conditions continue until we have a new agreement. You will be kept informed as we move along. Currently, over 1/3 of the locals have their bargaining protocol agreements signed and are proceeding to negotiating improved language which is current and relevant.

Report from the Provincial Table- 7th session April 29, 2011.

Our President Susan Lambert, opened the meeting with remarks regarding the BC Supreme Court ruling that rendered Bill 27 and Bill 28 unconstitutional and invalid. She stated that the ruling clearly showed there was complicity and collusion between BCPSEA and the Liberal government during the 2001-02 bargaining round.

Finally, Susan said that:

- the ruling had strengthened teachers' resolve
 - we expect to see the 2001 Collective Agreement stripped provisions restored
- we expect this round will be based on mutual understanding of professionalism, transparency, and integrity.

BCPSEA spokesperson Jacquie Griffiths assured us they are committed, as they were in 2006, to reach an agreement, and they value mutual respect and understanding.

Meaningful exchange took place today. Jim reiterated the importance of receiving a counter proposal at our next meeting. Jacquie Griffiths stated they will provide us with either a counterproposal or will give their view on how to proceed on the issue.

The next scheduled BCTF/BCPSEA meeting is May 16, 2011.

Our Side of the Table

Watch for updates from your local negotiating team who have met with the management team twice but had one meeting cancelled.

VTA Negotiators – Robyn Ladner (Lead Negotiator), Bruce Cummings, Craig Leverman, Kevin Bader and Lisa LaBoucane.



Reflections.....

Greetings, colleagues;

I'm not sure whether I consider current events to be the 'Winds of Change' or just more upheaval and uncertainty!

The recent B.C. Supreme Court ruling in favour of the BCTF's court challenge of Bills 27 & 28 have shifted everything for our negotiating teams. Much of the restored language dealt with class size and composition issues along with staffing ratios for specialist teachers such as counselors, learning assistant teachers, librarians and so on. We'll distribute the restored language through staff reps.

We have 9 local bargaining sessions scheduled before the end of June. This month we start tabling language. Meanwhile talks are continuing between BCTF and BCPSEA, mostly around the 'split of issues' at this point.

As you know, the Vernon District is planning to cut \$1.7 Million for next year's operations. The Saanich School Trustees, on the other hand, just called on the Government to review funding formulae and they approved an interim deficit budget. With continued declining enrollment, our District is projecting 8.05 FTE reduction in the number of teachers. But the means of determining the funding for the District is out of kilter: the District is 'promised' the same funding as last year and yet a large whack of the \$1.7 Million comes from cutting 8 teaching positions! Kindergarten funding for the new classes next year is down from what was promised by the Government. Our Superintendent says she wants to 'try to maintain the level of funding from last year' but can't say how that will be achieved.

Staffing decisions are being made. The process is unfolding as normal, but Secondary schools are facing major change because 165 of the 174 forecast decline in enrollment is in the Secondary grades, and it is not evenly distributed between the schools. My role is to make sure everything is transparent, fair and the Collective Agreement is adhered to. One of the discussions with District Staff will be about 'protected positions'. This, and the layoff line have not yet been determined as of May 2nd.

The winds of change for the College of Teachers will be uncertain until questions about a Provincial election are answered, but the Government seems to want to try the failed Ontario model of imposed PD to make sure teachers are 'current'. When will they ever learn?!

The VTA AGM, Wednesday, May 18th is a chance for you to directly participate in your union. I look forward to seeing you there.

Bruce Cummings
VTA President

VTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

***Wednesday, May 18th, 4:00 pm
VSS Theatre***



Refreshments - Door Prizes

Draft Agenda

◆ Election of VTA Executive for 2011-2012:

The Officers of the Association, except for the Past President and the President of OCTAV shall be elected for a term of one year by secret ballot at the AGM. Nominations for President shall be made in writing and submitted to the Association's office no later than Wednesday, May 4th 2011. All candidates for the position of President shall submit a resume for publication along with their nomination. Nominations for all Officers except the President and the President of OCTAV may be received from the floor of the AGM.

◆ 2010-2011 Executive Annual Reports

◆ Adoption of VTA Fees

◆ Bargaining Update



***Come out, be sure your voice is heard and that your union
is working to meet your needs and ideals!***

We look forward to seeing you there.

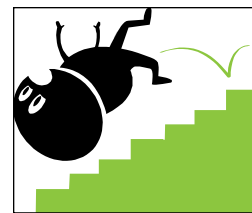
**The history of North America has been largely created by the deeds of
its working people and their organizations--there is scarcely an issue
that is not influenced by labor's organized efforts or lack of them.**

-- William Cahn, Labor historian

A message from the District Occupational Health & Safety Committee



If you are injured, no matter how trivial you think it is...report the injury to your designated first aid attendant! Then fill in a Worksafe form 6A and get it to your supervisor (usually the principal). Check the OH&S bulletin board at your work site for procedures if you are unsure. We see reports of injuries from broken limbs to scratches or bites from a student, but injuries aren't always physical.



Education Leaves 2011– 2012

Congratulations to the following teachers who have been approved for Education Leave during the 2011/2012 school year:

Shon Thomas (Kalamalka Secondary)
Rob Kopera (Kalamalka Secondary)
Christine Trickey (BX Elementary)
Irena McDonald (Alexis Park Elementary)
Debbie Drake (Vernon Secondary)
Sonja Straight (Okanagan Landing Elementary)

The Paid Education Leave provision in our Collective Agreement (Article G.26) provides the opportunity for up to 2 FTE leaves. As it turns out, several of these teachers are taking part-time Education Leaves. We wish them success in their courses!

IMPORTANT— Please be reminded that if you are retiring you need to get your 'bio' and photo to the VTA office for inclusion in the June Voices. Please contact Alana at the VTA office to have a form emailed or faxed to you for completion as soon as possible. Don't hesitate to call the VTA at 250-542-0456 (or email Alana at apethick@shaw.ca) if you have any questions. We would hate to leave anyone out!

Teachers' Pension Plan

Pension Estimates

For information about Pensions, find your latest pension statement to see how to use their web site to get a current pension estimate, and to play 'what if'!

Buying Back Pensionable Service

Remember that if you take a leave of absence you can usually make contributions for the time away from school, and the sooner you do it the less it costs.

Factor 88

A member who has attained age 64, has reached the factor "88," or, is in receipt of a retirement pension under a registered pension plan, may voluntarily withdraw from the long term section of the salary indemnity plan. Withdrawal may be made during any school year in which one of the foregoing conditions has been met and upon the completion of the appropriate withdrawal form (obtained from the plan administrator). Withdrawal will be effective, upon approval, in September for applications submitted in that month, and applications submitted later will be effective the month following approval of the application.

Pension Consultation

Arnie Lambert, most recently the Director of Income Security at the BCTF, is now retired and available for personal, one-to-one pension consultation.

Arnie brings an extensive pension background to this work, having served on the BCTF Pensions Committee for over 20 years, and having worked as BCTF pension staff for over 10 years. Arnie also has specific pension and benefits accreditations from Humber College (CEBS, PPAC).

Consultation rates vary from \$100 to \$250 depending on the level of information requested, and the work involved:



- * Basic consultation: a review of a teacher's pension statement, review of pension options, and the TPP/PPP/OAS benefits;

- * Enhanced consultation: additional work such as preparing future pension estimates, detailed analysis of pension options, provision of a retirement income budgeting spreadsheet, and if required, an analysis of pension splitting as a result of divorce.

Arnie's ad appears in the Classifieds section of the Teacher newsmag. Arnie can be reached at

604-354-5624, or at arnielambert@shaw.ca <<mailto:arnielambert@shaw.ca>>.



- ◆ Is equivalent to and as equally as rigorous as English 10, 11 & 12.
- ◆ Fulfill BC Graduation Requirements for Language Arts.
- ◆ Is accepted at all BC post-secondary institutes and the University of Calgary.
- ◆ Grades can be used by students in scholarship applications.

IRPs are available on the ministry website. **Teacher's Guides** and more are available on the following First Nations Education Steering Committee website <http://www.fnesc.ca/efp/index.php>.

Currently, course information regarding English First Peoples is being made available to students, parents, teachers, counselors and administrators within School District 22, in the hopes that Vernon students will begin to experience these excellent new courses starting in September of 2011! For more information, contact your local Aboriginal Education LSA.



Aboriginal Education LSA

President: Lori Phillip lphillip@sd22.bc.ca

Treasurer: Greg Ellis gellis@sd22.bc.ca

Secretary: Suzanne Winston swinston@sd22.bc.ca

Chairperson: Ben Louis benlouis@sd22.bc.ca



VTA Delegates Attending the BCTF AGM 2011

The BCTF AGM was held during the first part of our spring break. Nine Vernon teachers attended, helping to set policy and future directions for our Federation.

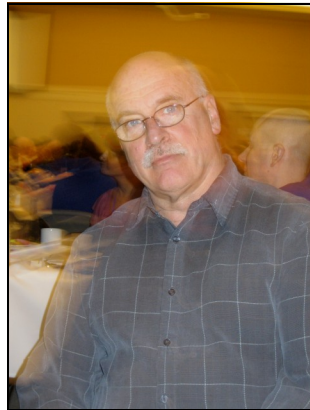
Our new Education Minister, George Abbott, gave a speech. It was nice to hear him acknowledge how important it is to have happy teachers by improving job “satisfaction”! Our BCTF President, Susan Lambert, told Abbott she was looking forward to meeting frequently with an Education Minister who will listen and value what teachers do. She compared the BC scene to that of Finland, where their Education Minister consistently sings the praises of their hard-working, autonomous, professional public school teachers.

Perhaps you’ve been following the union situation in Wisconsin. The vice-president of the Wisconsin Education Council, Betsy Kippers, received a standing ovation before and after her inspiring speech. Kippers outlined the campaign on behalf of labour rights that arose immediately after legislation was introduced to take away the rights of teachers and other public sector workers. Kippers said that social media were crucial in getting the story out. Using Facebook, Twitter and the phone allowed for an immediate response to the attack. It also was a way of getting the teacher message to the public. She told the delegates not to be afraid to be open with the public in talking about what is important to you.

Delegates approved an increase in our BCTF membership fees for next year (0.04% of your annual salary). This small increase is to bolster some depleted funds from our job action of 2005. It will actually be offset by a decrease in our SIP fee.

Several resolutions were passed concerning Aboriginal Education. As a result, the BCTF will lobby the Ministry to fully fund new and existing Aboriginal programs in elementary and secondary schools.

There was also much debate about pensions – to continue to encourage our investment corporation towards more ethical investing while maintaining financial stability.





BETTER SCHOOLS FOR BC

It's time for action

The BC Teachers' Federation has almost a century of history advocating for the welfare of the teaching profession and the well-being of students in this province. Below is a plan for quality Public Education.

A child poverty reduction plan

- Launch a comprehensive and accountable poverty reduction plan, with targets and timelines, aimed at eliminating child poverty in our province.
- Launch a comprehensive and accountable homelessness action plan, with targets and timelines, aimed at eliminating homelessness in our province.

Learning specialist teachers in every school

- Restore the learning specialist teacher positions lost over the last decade.
- Ensure that every school has a minimum standard of learning specialist teacher service, including the service of teacher-librarians, ESL teachers, learning assistance teachers, counsellors, special education teachers, and other teachers providing specialized curriculum and instruction

Authentic student assessment

- Adopt a scientific, structured sample approach to the administration of the FSAs.
 - Support teachers' authentic assessment practices.
- Work with the BCTF to address ministry, teacher, and parent concerns related to both student and system-wide assessment.

Respect for diversity and equal opportunities for all

- Ensure access to a broad variety of educational opportunities in all schools that make learning relevant and keep students in school.
 - Support employment equity initiatives for Aboriginal teachers, including recruitment and retention strategies.
 - Ensure that all school districts adopt and implement codes of conduct that address racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of harassment and discrimination in schools.
- Develop and provide learning resources and curriculum that reflect students' diverse identities and those of their families and communities.

Increase investment in public education

- Reverse the trend that has resulted in a steady decline in K–12 spending as a percentage of the total provincial budget and as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, and develop a plan to restore education funding to 1991 levels.
 - Fully fund the implementation of new curriculum and all new ministry initiatives.
- Fully fund mentoring and professional development programs requested by teachers to assist in supporting all students.

Full-scope collective bargaining rights

- Encourage, support, and fund school boards to enable them to work with teachers to successfully bargain a collective agreement and resolve issues locally.
- Restore full, free collective bargaining rights for teachers.

Social Justice Report

Mental Health Week is May 1-7. Take care of yourself and those around you. Check out the Employee wellness service at www.ppconline.info. Check out Vancouver teacher Michael Schratter's 'Ride Don't Hide' global ride for mental health. Watch 'Jack's story' at <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca/EN/Pages/default.aspx>



*Vernon SD 22 – Aboriginal Education invites you to a teacher's workshop! Professional Development Day
May 20, 2011*



Indigenous Perspectives

A BCTF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION WORKSHOP

This workshop will explore some of the impacts of colonization on Aboriginal/indigenous education. What is indigenous education? What are the paradigms, and where can we shift?

Facilitator Robert Genaille

When May 20, 2011

Where Vernon Museum (3009-32nd Ave)

Time 1:00 – 2:30

*****SNACKS PROVIDED!!*****

School: _____

Teacher: _____

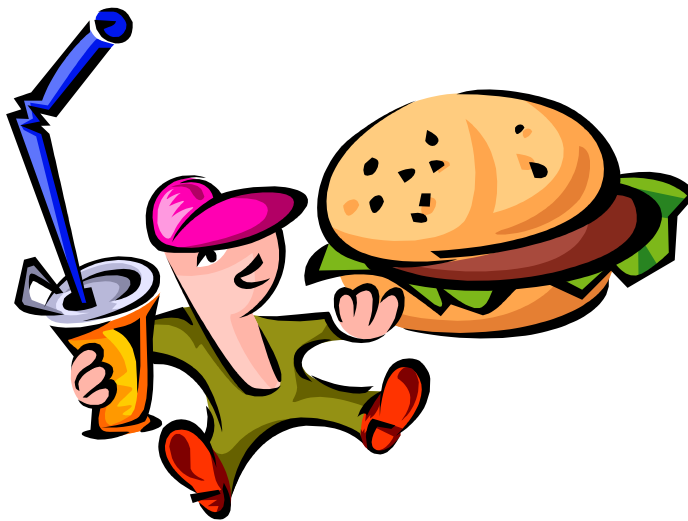
(Number of participants will be limited to 30)

RSVP Lori Phillip at lphillip@sd22.bc.ca

• Phone (250)549-9268 • Fax (250)549-9292



YEAR END/ RETIREMENT BARBEQUE



**Wednesday, June 29th
3:30 pm to 7:00 pm
Paddlewheel Park Hall**

**Hosts: W.L. Seaton School Staff
Hamburgers, Snacks, Refreshments
Drinks \$2**

**ALL SCHOOL DISTRICT #22 EMPLOYEES WELCOME!
(Teachers, CUPE, Trustees, Administration)**

VERNON TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION