

Vernon Teachers' Association

VOICES

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*Merry Christmas
Everyone and all
the Best to You
and Your Families
in 2011!*

Reindeer's Story at Christmas

According to the B.C. Department of Fish and Game, while both male and female reindeer grow antlers in the summer each year, male reindeer drop their antlers at the beginning of winter, usually late November to mid-December.

Female reindeer retain their antlers till after they give birth in the spring. Therefore, according to EVERY historical rendition depicting Santa's reindeer, EVERY single one of them, from Rudolph to Blitzen, had to be a girl.

We should have known... ONLY women would be able to drag a man in a red velvet suit all around the world in one night and not get lost!!!.---

Speaking for Teachers in the North Okanagan

Reflections.....

Greetings, colleagues;

Lord Ronald said nothing: he flung himself from the room, flung himself upon his horse and rode madly off in all directions.

Stephen Leacock (1869 – 1944)

Sometimes it is pretty easy to feel like Lord Ronald! This is a crazy system to work in where we make hundreds of decisions every day while dealing with the diversity of our students, parents, colleagues and heating systems in our schools. We have a thousand things to do every day and in the end we write a zillion comments on a zillion report cards and start it all over again. (Well most of us start it all over again! We've had two retirees so far this year, another few are lurking in the wings and there will be another rash of them in the Spring.)

I amused myself when I wasn't riding off in all directions one day by looking at some numbers on the Ministry of Education's web site. You can find Vernon teachers' and administrators' average salaries, ages, years of experience and so on. Did you know that last June the average teacher in Vernon was 44 years old? The average age hasn't changed much in the past 5 years, but the distribution is still shifting: in 2006 there were 48 teachers who were in their 20's, now there are 24; in 2006 there were 7 teachers in their 60's and now there are 14. This career must be very rewarding! Here's another interesting tidbit – people in B.C. live longer than those in the rest of Canada, and people collecting the B.C. teachers' pension plan live longer than the rest of B.C.'s citizens.

B.C.'s public school system teachers can be very proud that our students perform amongst the best in the world on international tests. As a result, we are considered one of the education systems to be 'studied' by other countries. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that student achievement is directly related to the relationships that teachers establish with students. So in the maelstrom of 'new this' and 'new that', 'try this approach' and 'try that approach', and as you ride madly off in all directions...remember this: you are the best!

On behalf of the Executive of the VTA, Alana Pethick (our office manager) and myself, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Bruce Cummings - VTA President

Know your Collective Agreement

Do you use your personal vehicle for carrying out your duties?

ARTICLE B.7 REIMBURSEMENT FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY LOSS.....32

Private Vehicle Damage: Where an employee's vehicle is damaged by a student at a worksite or an approved school function, or as a direct result of the employee being employed by the employer, the employer shall reimburse the employee the lesser of actual vehicle damage repair costs, or the cost of any deductible portion of insurance coverage on that vehicle up to a maximum of \$600.

ARTICLE B.10 REIMBURSEMENT FOR MILEAGE AND INSURANCE.....34

If you have to purchase additional insurance in order to comply with ICBC regulations respecting the use of one's personal vehicle for business purposes, the School District pays the difference in premiums. Teachers who are required to use their personal vehicles in order to carry out their regular duties or other Board business are paid mileage. This includes travel between work sites as required on a regular basis.

Social Justice Report

A Social Justice Shopping List

- ◆ Shop locally- markets, art galleries
- ◆ Shop fair trade- Ten Thousand Villages {Kelowna}, health food stores, most grocery & drug stores carry Fair Trade chocolate and coffee, Talkin' Donkey for fair trade jewelry
- ◆ Shop union made & fair work practices- see www.Free2Work or the ILRF website for ratings on the companies that you buy from.
- ◆ Shop for charities that not only address immediate survival needs but also advocacy and sustainability
- ◆ Shop second hand stores [Georgette, Carousel] or give certificates for services



Have a safe and relaxing holiday season!

Upcoming Pension Seminars

The Teachers' Pension Plan no longer sends a printed list of seminar dates and locations to schools. They discontinued this practice last year after they had difficulty with hotels and other venue providers cancelling their room bookings with very little notice.

The seminar schedules are online at the Teachers' Pension Plan website:

www.tpp.pensionsbc.ca Please note there are two upcoming seminars planned for Vernon on April 9th, 2011: 'Your Pension, Your Future' - 9:00 am to 10:30 am and 'Thinking About Retiring' - 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm.

BC Teacher's Vitality Project - *Living with Balance*

A Six-Week Group Program for Teachers

January 18, 2011 - February 22, 2011

Pre-registration is Required, Minimum no. of Registrants Required to Run the Program

We are now taking registrations for another series of workshops, 'Living with Balance' commencing in January 2011.

To register please access a referral form from the BCTF website at <http://bctf.ca/LivingWithBalance.aspx>

or contact Lynn Hiscoe at 1-866-766-5911 or by e-mail at lhiscoe@orgoc.ca.



Happy Holidays from the PD office! Hopefully you will have some time with family, friends, and to yourself, over the break. Things have “slowed down” just a little here at the office and that has given me time to devote to some collaborative projects that will be happening in the next few months.

The Okanagan Zone Conference on February 18th is coming together nicely and I’ve been meeting and communicating with the Central Okanagan and Merritt PD chairs to choose and schedule workshops. If you have a proposal for a workshop, it’s not too late but please contact me asap with a write up. Registration will open near the end of January.

Another project I’m very excited about is Teacher Inquiry. We were one of only 8 locals who received a grant from the BCTF (matched by the school district, thank you!). The 3 projects being funded are the Fulton Staff, a Full Day Kindergarten group, and a group I’ve formed that will be working toward expanding the model of Inquiry throughout the district. All involved are dedicated to their questions and will be busily researching and collaborating over the next 5 months. Thank you to all the teachers involved for keeping vibrant, relevant and meaningful PD alive.

Thank you to the District PD committee for your input and direction and to school PD chairs and committees for your leadership at the school level.

Have a wonderful holiday and if you need me, you can find me in the powder at Silver Star!

Sincerely,

Robyn Ladner
Professional Development Chairperson
prodchair@shaw.ca

PAID EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

Reminder that applications for full or part year paid educational leave must be received **prior to January 1, 2011** for leave in the 2011/2012 school year. The Director of Instruction or Designate submits the applications to the Joint Committee for recommendations to the Board. The Board will notify teachers of acceptance or rejection of their application by April 30, 2011. Teachers granted leave under this section undertake to return and to stay in the service of the Board for not less than the full-time equivalent of two school years.

Forms are available from Judy Sedge in the Board Office or Bruce Cummings at the VTA Office.

