

Vernon Teachers' Association

VOICES

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ANNA FULTON CAIL

1911 - 2009



Image Courtesy:
Vernon Museum and Archives Photo No. 1234

The VTA annually donates to the CHBC Good News Bear campaign, and our bear this year was named in honour of Anna Cail, a long time Vernon teacher and social advocate.

A portion of the cost of sponsoring a bear is contributed to the Vernon Food Bank so a big 'thank you' to the members of the VTA for your generous donation.

Anna's father was Clarence Fulton, she grew up in East Hill on the Fulton farm (near Silver Star Elementary) and attended the newly constructed Central School (now Ecole Beirsto) where her father was a teacher and principal. Anna graduated from UBC in 1934 with an honours B.A. in English and literature and a minor in history, and started teaching in Vernon in the newly constructed Vernon High School at Polson Park in 1936. She moved on to England and Minneapolis before returning to Vernon where she resumed teaching until her retirement in 1976.

On March 28th, 2009, Anna Caroline Cail passed away. The Vernon Museum put together an exhibit to honour her career as an educator, peace activist and historian. You can also check out the exhibit online at www.vernonmuseum.ca. It's a very interesting read and the photos of the old schools and Anna's family are wonderful.

The CHBC Good News Bears will be on Display at the Village Green Mall
December 2nd
10:00 – 3:00



Speaking for Teachers in the North Okanagan

Reflections.....

Greetings, colleagues;

“May you live in interesting times”. This statement has been attributed to a Chinese curse with the intention that the one who utters it hopes that the other person’s life may be surrounded by worries and obstacles which may follow a person as closely as a shadow.

The Ministry of Education is promoting change to the way schools operate based on a model developed in England and the USA. Personally, I see stratified consultation going on with very little involvement of the people who might have to implement the change. Teachers are relegated to the lowest stratum. Elsewhere in this newsletter you’ll see that the VTA is going to provide an opportunity for teachers to get involved directly with the dialogue about education change. Express your interest to your staff rep or directly to Bruce at the VTA office.

The BCTF Supreme Court challenge of Bills 27 and 28 (imposed collective agreements and class size & provision for special needs language) is underway. The web site bctf.ca has regular updates.

The Report Card templates are being tested and I’m hearing some interesting anecdotes. Thank you to all the teachers trying out the format and getting feedback to the developers. I hope everyone remembers that at this stage teachers must be critical and make suggestions for improvements! Otherwise we are doomed to repeat the mistakes from around the Province where centralized computer systems for report cards are the bane of everyone’s existence.

And of course...it is a Bargaining Year.

Like it or not, we seem to be living in interesting times!

Take care, everyone. If you don’t hear from me, consider this early Christmas Greetings.

Until next time,

Bruce Cummings
VTA President

Know your Collective Agreement

ARTICLE D.27 STAFF MEETINGS (see the Collective Agreement for the whole article)

- 1.** The principal shall give at least seven (7) days notice of a regular staff meeting. Where seven (7) days advance notice is not given, teachers shall make reasonable efforts to attend the meeting.
- 6.** Staff meetings shall not be scheduled to commence more than one half (1/2) hour prior to the beginning of classes nor shall they last longer than one hour and forty five minutes after the dismissal of the students.
- 7.** Teachers shall attend regular staff meetings, unless excused by their principal. Attendance at staff meetings which extend beyond the time frames set out in Article D.27.6 is not required, but teachers shall make reasonable efforts to attend such staff meetings.

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 your local president.**

This program has been initiated by the BCTF Health & Wellness program and developed by the Occupational Rehabilitation Group of Canada, a long-established service provider to the BC Teachers' Federation. There are a select number of BC communities where this program will be offered this year. *Living with balance* is a six-week program, which runs for two hours once per week. It focuses on developing tools and skills related to improving one's vitality and resiliency. Our holistic approach to wellness will equip teachers to make simple life-style changes that will positively affect their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

This six-week group program will provide opportunities for:

- ♦ education, self-evaluation, and examining the importance of maintaining life-style balance
- ♦ discussing the importance of nutrition; exercise; sleep
- ♦ managing symptoms of low mood, anxiety, and stress; boundaries and managing conflict
- ♦ learning strategies that increase awareness of factors that contribute to fluctuations in mood as well as methods to manage them
- ♦ reviewing proven techniques used to improve self-esteem and self-confidence, and manage stress and low mood
- ♦ defining what work-life balance means to each of us and what happens when our roles collide, having good boundaries is often attributed to having clear values
- ♦ setting goals and achieving them
- ♦ discussing how to be intentional, creative and assertive when you need to be.
- ♦ learning the importance of social connections and community in building long-term wellness, understanding that social isolation is a significant health risk factor.

For further information, please contact Lynn Hiscoe at 1-866-766-5911 or by e-mail at lhiscoe@orgoc.ca. Lynn Hiscoe is a consultant with the Occupational Rehabilitation Group of Canada (ORGOC). ORGOC is one of several service providers who provide supports to teachers across the province. Lynn is a clinical social worker who specializes in workplace mental health. Note: The purpose of this program is not to treat, but to promote, healthy lifestyles and improve emotional well-being. Consult your physician for specific guidance on health concerns.

Does "21st Century Learning" or "Personalized Learning" Intrigue you?

The VTA will be appointing seven members to the District Joint Education Change/Curriculum Change Committee and we are looking for names of teachers interested in working on this committee.

The primary functions of the committee shall be:

- a. To investigate, analyze, implement and evaluate educational and curriculum change.
- b. To provide district focus in educational/curriculum change.
- c. To support innovative projects, pilot projects and locally developed curriculum projects.
- d. To advise the Board in annual budget development with respect to funds to be designated for educational change/curriculum development.
- e. To allocate all funds designated through the annual district budget for educational change/curriculum development.

The VTA Executive will be asking the committee to have a specific focus on the 21st Century Learning model.

Please contact Bruce at the VTA office or your staff rep before December 15th.



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Please join us on Facebook.



www.facebook.com/BCTeachersFederation

Check out the BCTF on Facebook!

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And so much more.....check it out!

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.



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

If you use the 'Pension Seminars' link it will take you to a registration area for the two workshops currently available, and using the map provided the schedules for that area appear. If you want a province wide list you can click on the 'Register Manually' link and it will take you to a printable list.

Workshop titles: 'Your pension, your future' and 'Thinking about retiring'

Social Justice Report

The schools in the district have been doing many thoughtful acts to try and address the issue of poverty and hunger at the local level. A few schools collected many cans for the food bank and were able to have their donations matched by a few generous donors. Halloween for Hunger saw a few schools at the elementary and high school level collecting cans instead of trick-or-treating for candy. A way of collecting cans in one school was by hosting a haunted house for the students and having some friendly competition between groups in the school.

Some schools are helping out at soup kitchens, having their leadership students plan and provide the meal for the needy from start to finish. This is a way for students to become more deeply involved as they learn about the reasons for people using the Food Bank and feel more empowered themselves as they learn new skills to help others.

A big draw in mid-October was the Me-to-We day event in Vancouver where thousands of students and teachers gathered to listen to inspirational speakers and singers. Craig Kielburger was phenomenal and inspirational. There were quite a few high schools in attendance from School District 22 along with at least one elementary school. A "WE" trip was won by a student at Fulton school. He will go on a trip to help out in a community and is able to take five friends and a teacher along on his trip. Congratulations to this student as he puts a global face on hunger. From that trip also will be developed a youth conference on hunger and poverty for several schools. A BCTF Social Justice grant [Ed May] has been applied for.

Please drop a line to Nancy Ingersoll [nancyi@telus.net] or Moira Manthorne [chezmanthorne@gmail.com] to let us know what your school is up to and we would love to share your news with the rest of our district.

On another note, the next two weeks [Nov.25-Dec.10] is focusing on Ending Gender Based Violence. This is an internationally designed mobilization period that helps to raise awareness and take collective action around violence against women. It includes a number of significant dates for Human Rights and World AIDS Day. Did you know that a woman in Canada has a 1 in 8 chance of getting breast cancer and a 1 in 4 chance of being abused? Find out more through WeCanBC.ca and start some conversations at your school.

Please use the 'It Gets Better' campaign to raise awareness around homophobia and reach out to our LGBTQ students and give them support, especially during this time of several suicides covered in the media.

We have got almost 100% of schools with Social Justice reps. WoW! Thanks so much! If you want to be on the e-mail list for info, even if you are not the SJ Rep please get in touch. Thanks again.

Nancy Ingersoll and Moira Manthorne
VTA Social Justice Chairpersons

New, Enhanced Opportunities to Transfer Service for Pensions

The Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees recently decided to replace the BC Public Sector Transfer Agreement (PSTA) with the National Public Sector Transfer Agreement (NTA) for transfers among the College, Municipal, Public Service and Teachers' pension plans.

Both transfer agreements use similar calculation methods. However, the NTA has different and more flexible eligibility dates for members. Under the NTA, a member of the Teachers' Pension Plan must apply to transfer service from a former plan either before they terminate their employment or before they retire.

If you missed an application deadline or were previously told you were not eligible to transfer service under one of the transfer agreements, you might now be eligible to transfer your service to the Teachers' Pension Plan.

Please contact the plan (**1-800-665-6770**, www.pensions.gov.bc.ca) at your earliest opportunity if you have questions about your eligibility to transfer service from another pension plan.



Your PD Funds

PLEASE BE REMINDED that if you ***change schools*** you **MUST** contact your previous PD Rep and ensure that the balance of your available PD funds are transferred to your new school asap. It is your responsibility to ensure that your funds 'travel' with you. As well, be sure of your school's PD Fund Policies to ensure that monies aren't lost due to non-use/time expirations. Know where your money is and what amount you have access to!!

RENTALS, FOR SALE AND OTHER STUFF

Beautiful Big White Ski Home to Rent

True ski-in/ski-out access, with private hot tub and two decks. Sleeps 2 families comfortably. Fully equipped gourmet kitchen. See more at www.bigwhitepowder.com



Vernon Teacher's Association - Children and Family Play

An invitation to all School District Employees to a performance of "Charlotte's Web"

- Where:** Theatre, WL Seaton
When : November 27th, 2010 at 10:00 am,
Doors open 9:30 am
Cost: 2 Cans of Food per person.



This year the play is early, so it will be a family day to "warm up" for the holiday season. Santa will be making an appearance. If you wish to participate, please insure that the small present for your child is clearly labeled with their name. You may have noticed news stories that the food bank is in dire straights, so please bring 2 cans of food per person attending.



Please fax Craig Leverman 542-6076 with the following information:

Family name _____ # of Children _____
of Adults _____ Worksite _____

Please be reminded that it is first come, first served. Craig will send out a notice when there are less than twenty seats left.

Little Snippets.....

Update on recall - there are 5 or 6 teachers who were not recalled to any position, but there are about 30 who are 'under-employed' compared to what they are owed.

Retirees - Congratulations to Marlene Nickel and Dale Tousignault on their retirements this fall!

Make a Future Fee - As a result of a mediation and a consent award involving the BCTF and BCPSEA the fee charged to apply for teaching positions in B.C. school districts through BCPSEA's Make a Future web site will be discontinued as of February 1, 2011.



Professional Development in S.D. 22

Where have the last 3 months gone? It's been busy and Professional Development is no exception. Our little local conference "Learning to Support All Learners" on November 15th was a great success (in my humble opinion). We had about 350 teachers register and 30 talented presenters give workshops. I hope you found something to enhance your teaching practice. I would like to thank the conference committee, Joe Rogers, Lisa Laboucane, and Rita Tedesco, for their input and support. Jason Anderson, along with Tom and Calvin from the Board Office, provided tech support and ran around making sure rooms and presenters were set up with A/V. "You need a USB to connect the LED?"... "You need an EP? IP? RPM? address to access the wireless?"... I couldn't have done it without them. I welcome your feedback from this day. Please don't hesitate to make suggestions for improvement for the coming years.

Looking ahead, the Okanagan Zone Conference is mostly planned. It is on February 18th, 2011 at George Elliot in Winfield. Registration will be through the Central Okanagan again and look for the brochure and registration to open near the end of January.

PD funds have been distributed to all schools and your school PD chair will be working on the accounting over the next while. The District PD Committee has set a more equitable policy for the distribution of PD money. Not everyone understands how PD is funded and in the interest of transparency and equity, I offer the following rationale for individual allocations.

The Collective Agreement has a formula for generating PD funds based on full time and part time teachers, but not based on part time FTE.

The VTA uses a similar, but not identical formula which takes into account LSA's, the President's PD funds, a small holdback for discretionary funding and consideration for teachers who teach at more than one school/site.

In general, the funding formula is just that: a means to arrive at a total figure. The allocation of the school funds is then in the hands of the school PD committee.

It is an arithmetical mistake to consider part time teachers as deserving part time funding based on their FTE, because each part time teacher contributes more to the funding than is indicated at first glance. In fact, some part time teachers actually generate more funding for a school than the 1.0 teachers! If you use FTE as the basis for handing out funds, then someone who is at 0.8 will generate \$167 for the school, but only be allowed \$132 based on .8 of \$165 for the 1.0 teacher. Another example would be in a school where there are 53 FTE but 58 teachers, if everyone were to receive an equal allocation, it doesn't change the 1.0 teacher significantly (\$163.66 instead of \$165).

Therefore, the new District Policy evens out the inequities of 'formulae'.

**Robyn Ladner
Professional Development Chairperson
prodchair@shaw.ca**