



# TODAY

Issue # 5

December 13, 2007

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

## President's Column

### The Premier's Teacher Congress

Almost 100 teachers, including three of us from Delta, were among those selected to attend the Teachers' Congress on November 30, 2007 in Vancouver. Premier Gordon Campbell, however, being in China on a trade mission, did not attend.

While the Congress was held in the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, very little real dialogue was actually encouraged or permitted. Instead, the agenda was tightly scripted and controlled to ensure maximum exposure of topics selected by the Ministry: "Perspectives", Teacher Resource Demonstration, Literacy and Formative Assessment, Healthy Schools and Supporting Aboriginal Learners. Authentic dialogue was kept to a minimum. The few teachers who had an opportunity to speak did manage to voice their concerns within the context of the "official" topics. Class size and composition, student poverty and the insufficiency of funding featured regularly in the speakers' responses to the assembly. The highlight for me was a speech by Shawn Atleo, BC Regional Chief, Assembly of First Nations who gave a passionate keynote address on the need to support aboriginal students. I was dismayed that many, including Chief Atleo, speaking to the issue of aboriginal education, believed the only way aboriginal students could prove their worth in the education system was for them to take the same tests, such as FSAs, as other students. Teachers know that it is student learning, not student testing which authenticates practice and yields the truest measure of educational success; no agenda of accountability will ever compete with the internal sense of confidence and personal competency which comes when our students, including our aboriginal students learn – and, more importantly perhaps, **know** that they have learned.

### Delta Board of Education

Congratulations to Kelly Guichon and Teresa Townsley who were both re-elected as Board Chair and Vice-Chair respectively at Tuesday night's inaugural meeting of the Board. I was asked to pass on the following comments from Kelly Guichon: "We cannot even begin to express

our appreciation for the hard work and dedication that our teachers bring to our district on a daily basis. Many, many thanks to all of our teachers for all that they do to support teaching and learning."

May the holidays be a time for you to reconnect with family and friends. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



*From all of us at the DTA office: We wish you a happy and restful holiday. All the best for 2008!*

### BCTF NEW TEACHERS' AND STUDENT TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

**Partnering for Success: Teachers Helping Teachers**

**February 29 to March 1, 2008**

**Executive Airport Plaza Hotel**

**7311 Westminster Hwy**

**Richmond, BC V6X 1A3**

## January 2008 Pension Seminars

**Kwantlen University College, Surrey**

### Seminar 1 – Your Pension, Your Future

January 17, 5:00 – 6:30 pm

January 18, 5:00 – 6:30 pm

January 19, 9:00 – 10:30 am

### Seminar 2 – Thinking About Retiring

January 17, 7:30 – 9:00 pm

January 18, 7:30 – 9:00 pm

January 19, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

# Discretionary Day and Personal Leave Day

Although the discretionary day and personal leave day has been part of the collective agreement for several years, questions do arise from time to time.

## Discretionary Day:

- Every continuing teacher (full-time or part-time) is entitled to one discretionary day per year;
- These days do not accumulate from one year to the next;
- The discretionary day can be taken for **any** purpose and can be taken at **any** time during the year;
- You do not need to apply for the discretionary day. Use the same process you would use if you were calling in sick, except key into the SEM System the reason for your absence is your discretionary day (reason#2). (It is helpful to the Board if you give as much advance notice as possible);
- You receive full salary and benefits when you take your discretionary day.

## Personal Leave Day:

- You must apply to the Personnel Office for this day. Application forms are in your school. Make your application as far in advance as possible;
- You receive your full salary less the cost of a teacher-on-call for the day;
- This day **cannot** be attached to Christmas Break or Spring break. Also, it **cannot** be attached to a discretionary day, which is attached to Christmas break or Spring break;
- SEM System Reason: #7 - Leave at TOC cost.



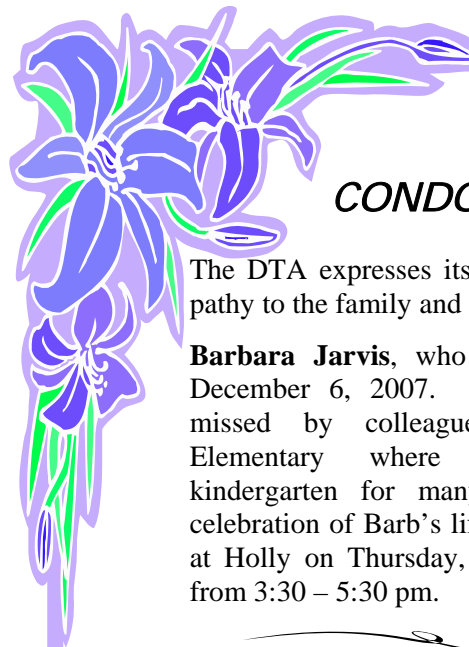
## *The PD Perspective*

*Jacque Schierer, PD Chairperson*

### F'ALL ABOARD MINI CONFERENCE FOR THE TEACHER-LIBRARIANS

I had the great privilege of attending, on behalf of the DTA, the Librarians' LSA networking/PD evening on Thursday November 15 at Cougar Canyon. Cindy Martin and Lynda Caron are the co-chairs of this year's LSA and organized this fantastic opportunity for colleagues to discuss issues relevant to teacher-librarians over wine and cheese. After that there were workshops, prizes, and a fabulous catered dinner ensuring that all those in attendance had a great time. Other special guests included Cougar Canyon's principal Dennis Ducklow, Judy Marshall and Rick Paterson. The tables were set with fresh flowers and filled with "freebies" for each librarian to take home. "This event was funded through contributions by our members and the generous financial assistance from our DTA PD committee. It was a most enjoyable evening, wonderful opportunity to get together with fellow TL's, share ideas, and pick up some expert tips from other trained Teacher Librarians." (Barbara Shoemaker) I would like to congratulate the Teacher Librarians for organizing another fun and professional evening and hope that other LSAs will follow their example.

**PS – MERRY CHRISTMAS AND ALL THE BEST IN 2008!**



## CONDOLENCES

The DTA expresses its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of:

**Barbara Jarvis**, who passed away December 6, 2007. Barb will be missed by colleagues at Holly Elementary where she taught kindergarten for many years. A celebration of Barb's life will be held at Holly on Thursday, December 20 from 3:30 – 5:30 pm.

**Karen Brown**, who passed away unexpectedly December 9, 2007. Karen retired in December 2002 and last taught at Cliff Drive Elementary. A celebration of Karen's life will be held in early January, date to be announced in the local and provincial newspapers.

