

Issue #10

June 18, 2009

President's Column

I am continually amazed at how quickly each school year passes and this year, in particular, passed with breakneck speed!

When I first began teaching 40 years ago in Vancouver, the school system of the day was in flux, moving from a whole class approach to teaching through individualized instruction. Corporal punishment – the strap - was still in use as a form of student discipline. Mercifully, the practice was ended in 1973 by then Education Minister, Eileen Daly.

My own political activism got its start in 1971 when BC teachers staged a one day strike for pensions. At the time, I was a second year teacher and pensions were the last thing on my mind, but a colleague who had taught 40 years was retiring that year and her pension was going to be a disgraceful \$200 a month, a sum well below the poverty level. Now, teachers participate in the Teachers' Pension Plan as joint trustees with administrators and others, but then, we had little if any say in how the pension funds would be invested. Years ago the government would use the pension fund as source of ready cash; it was used to fund government projects such as the WAC Bennett dam. Monies

borrowed by government from the teachers' pension fund, were financed with low interest loans.

Many of you will remember the Solidarity Strike of 1983. Then Premier, Bill Bennett, introduced a major "restraint" program that heralded the beginning of cuts to education funding. Sound familiar? He also introduced a legislative package that meant teachers with continuing contracts would be laid off (temporary contracts were still in effect in Delta at the time) and class sizes would increase. Bill 3 put teachers at the mercy of the employer. Other public sector unions were attacked in a similar way. Following a three day strike, teachers in every local of the province negotiated a seniority/severance agreement with their school boards. These protections continue to this day.

More recently, in 2002, the Liberal government stripped our collective agreements of class size and class composition language, support for students with special needs and ratios for non-enrolling teachers. Teachers have been working to regain these provisions ever since. The province-wide strike in October 2005 was the first time many of our newer teachers were called upon to defend public education. Teachers had the support of parents and the public in standing up for better learning conditions for students.

continue on page 2

DTA Honours Retirees

On Monday, June 8, the DTA held a celebration honouring teachers who have retired effective June 30. Retirees had the opportunity to share their retirement plans and their most memorable teaching moments. The DTA wishes the following colleagues a happy, healthy retirement:

*Kerry Babiuk
Kenneth Beadle
Sylvia Bishop
Debra Blacklock
Susan Bremness
Lynda Conlan
Cherie Corrigan
Heather Gilbertson
Catharine Gilmour
Terry Hiduk
John Hughes*

*Margaret Jensen
Beverley Lees
Leslie Lendvoy
Edna MacKenzie
Barb Makelke
Joan McDiarmid
Carol McKee
Margaret Meek
Shelley Morris
Ron Nelmes
Mary O'Donnell*

*Rick Owen
Brenda Parker
Elizabeth Sakiyama
Cheryle Sanderson
Frank Sawatsky
Beryl Schroeter
Joan Skosnik
David Sowerby
Joy Tarrant
Doreen Thompson
Julie Thompson*

*Mary Louise Veltri
Gwen Wells
David Williams
Val Windsor
Carol Wong
Barbara Woodford
Douglas Woodroff
Florence Yee
Lynn Zuehlke*

continued from page 1

The BCTF and the employer's agent, BCPSEA, are currently involved in a grievance over class size and class composition. The hearings are expected to end in early July with a decision from the arbitrator expected before school begins in September. Many teachers have questioned the legitimacy of the so-called "consultation" process the employer is required to have with teachers whose classes are over the legislated "limits" in class size and class composition. Some Delta principals are apologetic to teachers in the consultation meetings as they have no new resources to assist with classes that they know will be more than challenging to teach. Knowing that the BCTF is grieving these violations, I urge teachers to have their concerns recorded on the consultation sheets in the fall. In order for learning conditions for students and working conditions for teachers to improve, teachers will need to continue making their concerns known.

Being political is now, and always has been, part of the teacher's professional role.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to serve as DTA President for the last 8 years. As I retire, I leave you with wishes for a long and happy teaching career.



Summer vacation is time for relaxation and rejuvenation. **Enjoy!**



DTA Golf Tournament

Richard Kirincic, 2nd Vice-President



Congratulations to the Delta Secondary team of Tom Fuchko, Bob Bourgeois, Frank Sawatsky and Steve Cowan for winning

this year's golf tournament! In the largest turnout in recent history, 53 golfers descended upon Cove Links Golf Course in Ladner for 9 holes in the sunshine and some valued time with fellow colleagues. The community was very generous this year and helped ensure that every golfer received a prize.

Congratulations to Steven Cowan who was the winner of a new iPod Touch. Thank you to all who participated, and we look forward to seeing you all next year!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The deadline for submitting Pro-D receipts for reimbursement is **JUNE 30, 2009**.

If you have attended a workshop, credit course, etc. during the year and have not yet received your reimbursement, check to make sure the DTA has received your proof of payment (receipt) and proof of completion. No reimbursements will be issued for receipts received **after the deadline date**.

The DTA office is closed as of June 26, cheques can be issued up to June 25. After that date, cheques will be issued when the office reopens on August 31.

Teachers Teaching on Call

Susan Yao, TTOC Rep

On Thursday, June 4, Teachers Teaching on Call in Delta attended a Social at the DTA office. Those in attendance were treated to, among other things, sushi and fine cheeses, as well as beverages to quench their thirst and encourage conversation. Several members of the DTA Executive were in attendance at the Social. DTA President, Val Windsor provided opening remarks. PD Chair, Jacquie Schierer answered burning questions regarding the availability of and procedures for TTOCs to access PD funds. TTOCs are eligible to receive these funds with the same rights as other teachers in the district. A discussion of current TTOC issues ensued and the possible formation of a TTOC committee emerged. Any TTOCs in the district interested in participating on such a committee should contact the DTA office.

Congratulations to the lucky door prize winners!

Important Reminder

BCTF members who still carry travel insurance with the former provider can now switch over to the BCTF Advantage Program Travel Insurance on this year's renewal. You can see the details of the new program at www.bctfadvantage.ca, or you can call 1-877-778-8717.