

Issue #3

October 16, 2008

### *President's Column*

At the October 7, 2008 School Board meeting, the following motion was passed unanimously:

**THAT the Board of Education accept the Superintendent's Report on the organization of classes for 2008 - 2009 school year.**

On the same day, the DTA received copies of the class size/class composition forms that school principals had to complete after consulting with teachers about their classes. While the DTA has not yet analyzed the forms, we can report the following information:

- In 2007/2008, there were 151 secondary classes with more than 30 students. This year, there are 181 classes in the same position, an increase of 30 classes and 73 of those classes have 32 or more students. Teachers of classes such as band and choir may have chosen to instruct larger classes but not all of the 73 classes fit that category.
- In 2007/2008, no intermediate elementary classes exceeded 30 students. This year, there are 2 classes where teachers agreed to take more than 30 students.
- In 2007/2008, 433 secondary classes had more than 3 students with special needs. This year, there are 456 classes, up 23 from last year.
- In 2007/2008, 68 elementary classes had more than 3 students with special needs and this year there are 70 classes in the same position.

Information still to be garnered from the Board's data includes the number of elementary and secondary classes that have more than 4 students with special needs. The DTA is aware of several such classes.

The DTA asked members whose classes violated the size and/or composition numbers to complete a form for our own records. While there was no room for teacher comments on the Board's forms, teachers were asked to provide comments on the DTA forms. Teachers did not "blame" their administrators or the Board for the class size/class composition issues they are dealing with. Instead, blame was laid squarely where it belongs: in the continued underfunding of the public education system by the Liberal government.

At the Board meeting, the DTA commented on the Board's information provided and once again indicated that class size is especially important for reasons of safety in classes such as shops and labs and for workload issues in heavy marking courses such as English 12. Class composition was stressed as the greatest challenge for teachers to effectively meet the learning needs of all students. Schools that have a single class at each grade level have no other options for student placement; composition issues abound in these schools. It is clear to teachers that Bill 33 did not resolve issues facing teachers in their classrooms. Is it any wonder that teachers want to make education a vote determining issue in the upcoming provincial election?

**DTA General Meeting  
4:00 pm, Monday, October 27  
Delta Secondary Staff Cafeteria  
4615 - 51 Street, Ladner**

**Agenda:**

- **Endorsation of School Trustee Candidate(s)**

**Immediately followed by a**

# PEAC Report

Hello Colleagues!

Election season is usually the best time to catch the attention of government. Well, with elections here, there and everywhere, your P.E.A.C. (Public Education Advocacy Committee, for those who still wonder) is having a very busy season. Research clearly shows that teachers, as a group, are the most trusted authority on educational issues, so we are the ideal people to make education an election issue.

The BCTF and the DTA are working hard this year to maintain a public awareness campaign to promote education and allow teachers to be active participants, rather than passive targets.

By the time you read this the Federal Election will be all done and we will be gearing up for the Municipal Elections on Saturday November 15th. This includes the election of School Board Trustees. Trustees are responsible for approving local budgets, overseeing staff and lobbying the Provincial Government on behalf of our students. Therefore, **teachers have a direct professional interest in who becomes a trustee.** For the 2008 municipal campaign, the DTA is adopting a brand new initiative. Following an informal 'straw-poll' vote of Delta teachers which showed a degree of support for the idea of endorsement of candidates, we are inviting candidates for School Trustee to apply, if they wish, for endorsement by the DTA. Potential candidates will be interviewed by a committee of teachers, who will make a recommendation to a DTA General Meeting. Final decisions on endorsement will be made at the general meeting. This is in addition to our usual process of soliciting written statements from all candidates. **All the information we gather will then be mailed in a package to teachers who live in Delta for your consideration as you make your decision.** Note that endorsements, if any, are for individuals, not slates or parties. If you have questions, or better yet, would like to be on the recommending committee, please contact the DTA office.

Tuesday, May 12, is the date of the BC Provincial Election.

Your union will be again working hard to make education an election issue. But more about that later...  
Happy voting!

Pat Truelove,



## DTA Scholarship Winners



Burnsview Secondary  
Delta Secondary  
Delview Secondary  
North Delta Secondary  
Sands Secondary  
Seaquam Secondary  
South Delta Secondary

Sam Cawkell  
Dylan Williams  
Matthew Shinde  
Gurkamal Aujla  
Devon Rutledge  
Jenny Hsueh  
Kate McQueen

### "Tad" Boyes Scholarship

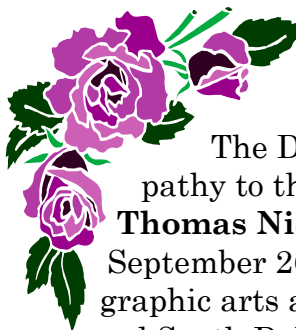
Congratulations to **Kathleen Mickie**, 2008 DTA recipient of the \$750.00 "Tad" Boyes Scholarship. Kathleen is the daughter of Joan Mickie (Ladner Elementary). Her career goal is to become a veterinarian at the Vancouver Aquarium.

## Pensions Safe in Times of Market Volatility

A memo entitled "Pensions safe in times of market volatility" has been posted on the home page of the Teachers' Pension Plan website.

Here is a direct link to the actual pdf memo:

[http://www.pensionsbc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PENCORPCONTENT/TPPPAGE/NEWS/TPP\\_PENSIONS\\_MARKET\\_VOLATILITY\\_02102008.PDF](http://www.pensionsbc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PENCORPCONTENT/TPPPAGE/NEWS/TPP_PENSIONS_MARKET_VOLATILITY_02102008.PDF)



## CONDOLENCES

The DTA sends it's deepest sympathy to the family and friends of **Thomas Nicoll** who passed away on September 26, 2008. Tom taught graphic arts and social studies at Delta and South Delta Secondary. Tom's passion for the DTA and member rights was evident in his active participation on the DTA bargaining team in 1987 when teachers were first given the right to bargain working conditions. He will be missed.