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S.T.A. in Touch

**A newsletter of the Saanich Teachers' Association
BCTF members of Local #63 (Saanich)**

Hello STA members. I don't know about you, but the month of May feels like a warm-up to the final sprint to our June 30th school year finish line. And the gorgeous weather we have just had this past weekend serves as a wonderful appetizer to what we hope is a delicious summer of weather (note to self: eat before writing newsletter articles).

There is an AGM on Wednesday, May 15th at 4pm at Claremont Secondary. PLEASE ATTEND. A lot happens at our AGM. Here are just a few: your STA bargaining team will be providing an update on local bargaining, a new executive will be elected, and the approval of the STA budget for 2013/14. And of course, there will be refreshments!

Colin Plant & Devon Armstrong

STA AGM Wednesday, May 15th, 2013 @4pm at Claremont

Table of Contents

President's Report	2
Retirement Banquet.....	2
Bargaining Update	2
Local Election Contact.....	3
Bargaining.....	4
Professional Communications.....	4
First Nations Report.....	5
Health and Safety Report.....	6
Local Representatives Report	7
Professional Development Report	8
Provincial Specialist Associations.....	8
Year-End Report.....	9
Social Justice Report	10
Treasurer's Report	11
Let's Get Social!	11



President's Report

by Sean Hayes

Retirement Banquet

It's that time of year again: time for us to fete our retiring teaching and administrative colleagues as they head into their golden years. We are very excited to have the chance to "come home" to the newly renovated Beach House (formerly McMorrans) for our retirement banquet venue this year, and hope that you will consider joining us to celebrate the careers of the 20 teachers and 3 administrators who will soon be enjoying that endless summer we all dream about.

What: S.T.A./S.A.A. Retirement Banquet

Who: List of retirees will be sent to Staff Reps shortly

When: Friday, June 21st @ 6:00 p.m.

Where: The Beach House Restaurant

How: Tickets can be purchased by sending a \$25 cheque to Sally at the STA Office. Make cheques payable to "Saanich Teachers' Association"

Why: Do you need a reason to have a waterfront party in June?



Bargaining Update

You will have no doubt noticed by now that this round of provincial bargaining feels quite different from the last round. Gone are the almost daily updates from the bargaining table, and with them have also gone the "he said, she said" media stories.

The BCTF and BCPSEA seem to have learned a valuable lesson from our last round of bargaining, and have agreed to spend as much time and energy as possible at the actual bargaining table, as opposed to spending time and energy trying to defend our respective

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – CONTINUED

positions in the media. The provincial table also includes a few other key changes, with the involvement of well-respected arbitrator/mediator Mark Brown as a facilitator, and the establishment of a side table tasked with developing a “facts package” which details the true costs of any tabled proposals. (It is also interesting to note that the “Saanich Way” has also been imported to the provincial table, with our very own Keven Elder serving as the superintendent representative on the BCPSEA team.)

It is hard to say whether these new approaches will result in a more positive result this round, but both parties have reported a more respectful, constructive tone at the table. Bargaining has been put on hiatus during the campaign period, and will resume once a new government has been elected.

Teachers looking for table updates should check out the *Report from the Table: Provincial bargaining updates* link on the My BCTF members' portal. A local bargaining update can be found later in this newsletter.

Local Election Contact

by [Don Peterson](#)

On May 4th and 5th, the STA and COPACS hosted two all candidate meetings, one for each riding in the district. We had Adam Stirling as the moderator, and he presented the parties and the audience with a very professional meeting. I was impressed with the diversity of the questions from the audience. Despite the success of the presentation of the meeting, I was disappointed that Stephen Roberts, the BC Liberal Candidate for Saanich North and the Islands refused to attend the meeting. Though the meetings attracted 50 people at Parkland and about 70 people at Claremont, I was disappointed with the attendance of teachers and parents. I helped organize these events to provide a venue for parents and teachers to express their opinions on the direction of education in BC and to help make education an election issue in the ridings of the school district. With the low turn-out of parents and teachers to these events, I am concerned that message for the two ridings is that education is not an election issue.

Please keep in mind that Election Day is TODAY, May 14th. Be sure to vote. For schools that are holding their staff meeting today, the Elections Act requires that the meetings end by 4:00pm to give the required 4 hours to be able to vote.



Bargaining

by Don Peterson

The bargaining team has met with the employer on 7 occasions. Bargaining has been moving in a positive direction and we have signed off on several items already. We hope to wrap up bargaining by Mid-May. Please come to your AGM on May 15th, for a detailed in committee report on bargaining.

Professional Communications

by Colin Plant

This past year it has been a privilege to serve in the role of Professional Communications on the STA Executive. While I was acclaimed into the position, I have taken the role seriously and appreciate the opportunity it provided me to represent Saanich Teachers.

In my role I have done my best to increase the communication inside the Association by editing the STA in Touch. The 're-birth' of the STA in Touch has been a success on every level. Each issue has been full of useful information (many Staff Reps use it at Staff Meetings) and fun contests. I have also slowly started editing our website, maintained a Twitter account (@BCTF63), a Facebook page and a Facebook account called "Saanich Teachers".

I was also very pleased to organize the Saanich Teachers' Mark-In we had on January 19th. While we had a small amount of teachers present at each Starbucks location, we earned huge media exposure in the form of evening news stories on each of Victoria's main television stations.

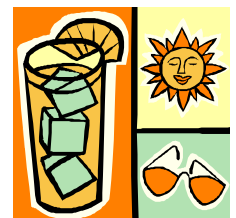
I would be remiss not to thank my amazing STA in Touch co-editor Devon Armstrong for all her help with producing our newsletter. We are lucky to have such a hard-working secretary on our executive.

May Trivia...no just a contest...for everyone!!

What are your summer plans?

Everyone who submits what their summer plans are by June 2nd will be entered into a draw for one of 2 Chapters \$25 giftcards!

Email your 1-2 sentence submission to [Colin Plant](#).



First Nations Report

by Ginny Underwood

Hello everyone! I have completed my sixth year as your Ab Ed Contact...wow, how time flies. I would like to give you the highlights of my work this year. I was fortunate to be able to attend the FNEC Conference in Vancouver on the Provincial Pro-D Day. That was awesome...I loved the networking with colleagues from around B.C., meeting new people and having reunions with friends I have not seen in a long time. I am honoured to have had the opportunity to do so...because it is an integral part of my job. I also do not feel as isolated in my role if I have a network of people to work with. I could not have done this without the monies from this role, so I am thankful for that. My Pro-D funds from my school and my Ab Ed monies made it more affordable for me to do so. I would love to attend every year or every other year, but it is so expensive to pay for registration fees, hotel, travel and meals with our meagre Pro-D funds.

I attended the South Island Zone meeting in the fall. There was only one Zone meeting this year, due to the cutbacks. I enjoy the Zone meetings where I meet with all of our districts in our local area (Gulf Islands, Sooke, Victoria, Cowichan, and Saanich). It is very invigorating to hear about the initiatives and updates about important work in other districts.

Employment Equity (EE) is my ongoing project and will continue to be in the years to come. EE is no longer 'Tabled' in Saanich, so Sean and I have been quite involved in meeting with our Employer to discuss and take baby steps to broach the subject of Employment Equity...and what this means for our district. It is a long and slow process, but it is what we need to do. I would like this to move along faster, but it is not possible. So we continue to have our meetings with our Assistant Superintendent, Scott Stinson and Paul Standring and we have come up with a plan. It involves a lot of research, talking with the staff liaison at BCTF, Gail Stromquist, as well as talking to Presidents from other districts who are in the midst or already have an Employment Equity Plan/Policy in place. There are many facets to consider, and this does not even touch on recruitment of Aboriginal teachers or encouragement to go into the teaching profession. We need more Aboriginal role models in all of our schools, so that our Aboriginal students can see themselves walking in our moccasins one day, as a Teacher, an Education Assistant, a Custodial Engineer or a Secretary. One day in the future we will be making a presentation to membership and to the Board about Employment Equity, so stay tuned.

Ginny Underwood
Aboriginal Education Contact

Health and Safety Report

by Patsy McCarter

It has been a pleasure to serve as STA Health and Safety Committee Chair for the 2012-13 school year. As H&S Chair, I attend Regional Zone Meetings on behalf of STA members. During the fall meeting it became apparent that violence, bullying and harassment in schools are concerns province wide. The institution of Bill 14 (Bullying and Harassment) last summer and the recent WCB announcement of corresponding policies that will take effect in November, 2013 are changing how we view our response to volatile incidents in schools.



In the fall, the STA hosted a well-attended SURT for our Health and Safety reps to explore the protections and procedures available to remedy safety issues in schools focusing on Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) processes and violence protection. Emphasis was on risk assessment and processing reports of violence, up to and including a WCB claim. In addition, we discussed the law on the release of a student's history of violence in the context of a violence protection program.

One of the roles of the H&S Chair is to attend bi-monthly District Health and Safety Meetings on behalf of STA members. The district committee reviews district wide health and safety concerns and issues looking for trends and makes recommendations with a prevention focus. One result this year is the providing of school keys to teachers, including TTOC's as a safety measure in the event of a school lock down.

WorkSafeBC Magazine has a very good article in the [March/April 2013](#) issue entitled "Fair Warning." The article discusses the evidence that workplaces committed to reporting minor incidents and close calls are better equipped to prevent the most serious of injuries. A sound reporting culture goes beyond the "blame game" when incidents are reported, analyzed and acted upon and employees are encouraged to be on the alert for those times when things are not going as smoothly as they should be.

There are four vacancies coming up on the BCTF Health and Safety Advisory Committee. This committee recommends policy at the provincial level, reviews issues and provides advice to the Executive Committee with respect to health and safety in schools. The deadline for applications is May 31, 2013. Please consider [applying](#) to this committee.

I love this definition when considering our role in prevention:

In order to determine what is reasonable in the (WCB) policy, a definition below is included for a “reasonable person.”

Black’s Law Dictionary, Ninth Edition defines a reasonable person as follows:

“...a person who exercises the degree of attention, knowledge, intelligence, and judgment that society requires of its members for the protection of their own and of others’ interests. The reasonable person acts sensibly, does things without serious delay, and takes proper but not excessive precautions...”

Have a safe and healthy year-end and enjoy your summer!

Local Representatives Report

by [Colin Plant](#) & [Mark Skanks](#)

The next Representative Assembly is scheduled for May 24-25 in Richmond. Mark and I will be representing Saanich at these meetings. This meeting is important as we will be allocating budgets for the upcoming year. Whereas the BCTF AGM in March sets the fee members will pay each year, the Representative Assembly is tasked with voting on budget allocations. The Executive Committee and the Executive Director then are responsible for ensuring budgets are adhered to.



Mark and I are the two LRs for Saanich but we each carry four cards each based on the size of our local. The formula for determining how many voting cards each local gets is based on a BCTF bylaw that states each local receives "a number of voting cards equivalent to one vote for every 0.2 per cent of the total voting membership of the Federation." (25.D.02 in our Member's Guide)

In anticipation of this meeting you are most welcome to send [Mark](#) and [Colin](#) emails via Zimbra to share your opinions on the budget of the BCTF.

Professional Development Report

by Holly Mair

Provincial Specialist Associations

What are PSAs?

The BCTF includes 33 provincial specialist associations. PSAs are channels for members to exchange ideas on research, teaching strategies, curriculum development, and other shared interests.

Why Join A PSA?

PSAs give members:

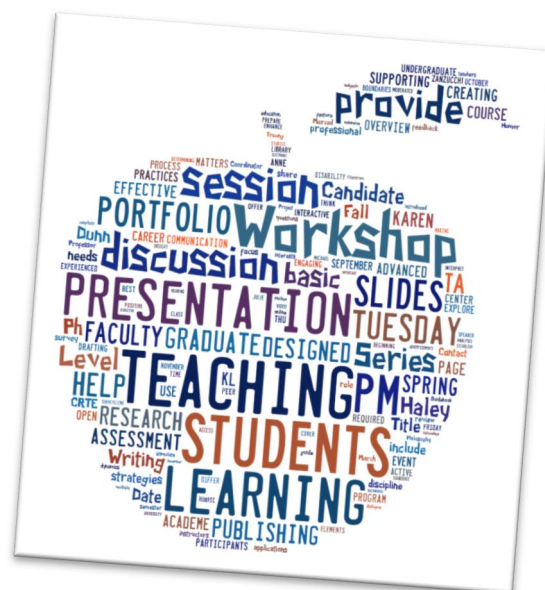
- information on new methods of teaching
- networks of teachers in similar teaching areas
- specialty publications
- support for exemplary practice
- support for new teachers
- teacher awards
- teaching/learning materials

PSAs host for members:

- annual conferences
- annual general meetings
- local or regional conferences

PSAs provide a collective voice to:

- help develop BCTF directions
- influence curriculum and assessment policies
- provide advice to the BCTF Executive in order to influence the Ministry of Education



What Does it Cost?

The cost of joining a PSA varies, depending on the PSA. Some are as inexpensive as \$20.00 per year, while others are in the \$50.00 - \$60.00 range. You will notice special rates for TTOCs, student teachers and retired teachers.

The Saanich Teachers' Association recognizes PSA memberships as professional development. This means you can apply to be reimbursed from your school-based PD fund.

Why wait?

Join today! To see an extensive list of PSAs, to join a PSA or to gather more information, go to <http://bctf.ca/psas.aspx>.

Year-End Report

This year, my work involved the following:

1) Transfer of money from Saanich Board Office to Saanich Teacher Association

This year we went back and forth with the school board office between mid-October and mid-November to get all of the PD money transferred to school. Staffing changes at the SBO in tandem with implementing a new system delayed the process but eventually this was sorted out.

2) PD Rep Support

In the Fall I hosted a BCTF sponsored training session for reps. In March all PD Reps were invited to a half day meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to review the PD Accounts, to discuss future policy changes, to review and refine the reimbursement process and form and to support reps by answering questions and concerns

3) Meetings

I attended all monthly Executive meetings to liaison between PD Reps and the STA Executive. Similarly, I attended the BCTF Zone Meeting to liaison with other local districts and share PD concerns.

4) Website/Communication

I maintained the STA PD website and submitted monthly articles to the STA-In Touch. I also provided email and phone support to teachers and PD Reps.

5) Joint PD Committee

I chaired meetings and supported Joint PD Members, include our new TOC Rep—thanks Alisa!

6) Tapestry Workshop

I coordinated our contribution to the Tapestry Tri-District workshop. Meeting responsibilities were shared by the Joint PD Committee.

7) Accounting

I worked with our accounting firm Mann and Moulson to redesign our accounting spreadsheets. I have also been responsible for processing PD forms, maintaining our accounting spreadsheet, balancing our account and signing cheques.

8) Professional Growth Council (PGC)

I attended three after school planning meetings as the STA Rep on the PGC committee. I also helped facilitate both sessions.

9) Priority Fund Support

I supported 18 separate priority fund project teams and maintained the accounts for these projects.

10) Local Specialist Associations

I encouraged and supported local specialist associations in the district. All 4 grants were distributed.

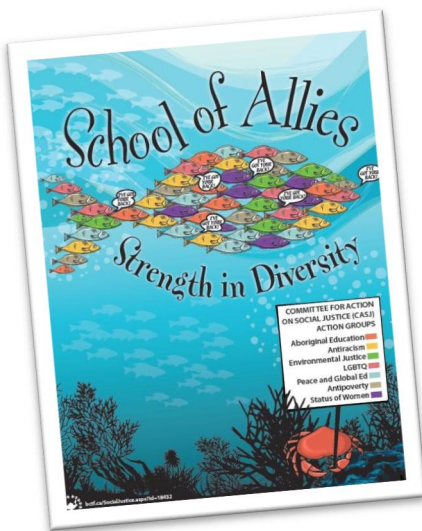
Thank you for putting your trust in me this year!!

Social Justice Report

by Dianne Cacciato & Joe Winkler

Hello and happy May from your Social Justice Reps.

Hard to believe that we are into the final count down for this year. May is a good time to reflect on what the year has brought us before the rush of June begins. There have been many opportunities to share lessons on social justice with your students. Here are a few more for May:



- É May 3rd was International Migratory Bird Day. You can find a game to play with your students [here](#). You can also find 9 lessons that combine Math and Science on the topic of migratory birds [here](#).
- É In May the BCTF is sponsoring the Week Against Homophobia which culminates in the May 17th National Day for the Elimination of Homophobia and the International Day Against Homophobia. IDAHO has lessons for teachers which can be found [here](#) or [here](#)
- É May 22nd is International Day for Biodiversity. There is a set of lessons appropriate for elementary school classes [here](#).

Things to think about for June:

- É June 3-9th – Commuter Challenge
- É June 5th – UN World Environment Day
- É June 11th – UN World Population Day
- É June 12th – World Day Against Child Labour
- É National Aboriginal History Month



Finally, just an encouragement to get out and exercise your democratic rights and vote!!!

April Contest Winners!

Congrats to Robyn Quaintance from SIDES and Peter Heywood from Stelly's for winning April's contest! Each will receive a \$25 Subway Card.

Treasurer's Report

by Mark Skanks

Our budget advisory committee met recently to review our current year's spending and to forecast our needs for next year. Some of the factors that we have had to consider include: the Board's prediction of a decline of 6 FTE teachers for next year, based on enrolment; the increase in the number of local items in the split of issues; recent changes to the BCTF operating grant structure; and the news that our stalwart Office Manager of 13 years, Sally Glen, intends to avail herself of the new phased retirement clause in her contract and reduce her time next year.

We hope to see you at the general meeting on Wednesday the 15th where you can examine the finer details of the budget that the Executive is proposing for your consideration.

Also, if you wish to be more involved in the preparation of the budget or other decision-making processes of the STA, please consider putting your name forward for one of the Executive positions at this meeting. Self-nominations are allowed and encouraged.

Let's Get Social!

The STA is getting more and more connected to the world of Social Media. Join us!

Our website is: www.saanichteachers.com

Follow us on Facebook at: [Saanich Teachers' Association](https://www.facebook.com/SaanichTeachersAssociation)

Follow us on Twitter at: @BCTF63

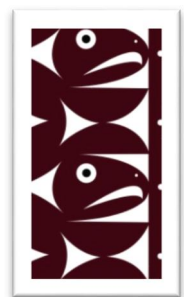
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If you have any feedback on this newsletter,
or would like to submit an article, please contact:

Newsletter Editor: Colin Plant
& Devon Armstrong



IMPORTANT DATES FOR STA TEACHERS

1 HR TO FACILITATE PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS RE. STUDENT PROGRESS

DATES

Brentwood Elementary	Nov-7	Nov-8	Mar-6	Mar-7
Cordova Bay Elementary	Nov-20	Nov-21	Nov-22	Mar-7
Deep Cove Elementary	Oct-3	Oct-4	Nov-14	Mar-6
Keating Elementary	Oct-24 (2hr closure)		Oct-25 (2hr closure)	
KELSET Elementary	Nov-1	Nov-28	Feb-28	Apr-10
Lochside Elementary	Nov-6	Nov-7	Nov-8	Feb-28
Prospect Lake Elementary	Oct-17	Oct-18	Feb-27	Feb-28
Sidney Elementary	Sept-26	Sept-27	Nov-22	Mar-7
Bayside Middle	Oct-3	Oct-4	Feb-14	May-23
North Saanich Middle	Oct-24	Nov-21	Feb-14	May-23
Royal Oak Middle	Oct-24	Oct-25	Feb-6	May-30
Claremont Secondary	Sept-20	Nov-22	Feb-7	Apr-25
Parkland Secondary	Sept-13	Nov-29	Feb-21	Apr-25
Stelly's Secondary	Sept-20	Nov-29	Feb-21	Apr-25

ALL SCHOOLS (TWO WEEK SPRING BREAK IMPLEMENTED)

Friday, October 19, 2012	Province Wide
Friday, November 9, 2012	School Based
Friday, February 15, 2013	Individual (tri-district)
Monday, April 15, 2013	School Planning Day
Monday, May 13, 2013	School Based

LAST DAY OF CLASSES: FRIDAY JUNE 28TH (not that we're counting!)