

June 2015

STA in TOUCH

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

Well, June is here and the weather makes it seem like Summer is already upon us! It would be a gross understatement to suggest this year has been quite unique and we can't say we blame you if you were to say that we hope to never see another one like it. However, the Saanich Teachers' Association can be proud knowing that we were very co-ordinated during the job action, had excellent morale on the lines and when we went back to work, we had a strong year teaching in Saanich. So take the summer to recharge, and we shall see you in September.

Angie and I would like to thank the outgoing members of the STA executive for their service and congratulations to the incoming executive for 2015-16. This issue also marks our last issue as newsletter co-editors. After three years Colin will no longer be serving as editor but will remain on the executive as a Local Representative. After one year as co-editor Angie will now be serving as the Social Justice chair for the STA.

A final comment: Our local needs you to be engaged. Whether on the executive, at the school or simply by reading this newsletter we want you to know that your opinion and participation is always welcome.

-Editors Colin Plant and Angie Savage

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President's Report

by Mark Skanks

Hi everyone,

As I reflect on my STA in Touch reports to you over the last year, I feel – sheepishly – that I have allowed my updates to become somewhat of a harbinger of doom.

I picture teachers cringing at their desks expecting the latest STA in Touch to arrive with grim details of the government's latest bombshell. Years from now, they will have their pensions, yes, but will it be compensation enough for the debilitating life-long effects of the inbox sound that they were so cruelly trained to fear, like Little Albert? The guilt, people, the guilt...!

In all seriousness, I keep having to bring you bad news and I don't like it.

So, although there are some less than happy updates to follow below, I wanted to end the year by reflecting on a sample of some of the positive things that happened in the Association this year, lest we forget:

- We started the year with an unprecedented general meeting at the Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney, with over 300 of our 500 members attending. It wasn't where we would have preferred to be, obviously, but we were able to coordinate everyone into school groups to elect their staff reps, staff committees and Pro-D chairs for the year. We also served Donnie's now-famous lemonade, gave out dozens and dozens of unclaimed strike pay cheques, and lined the side of the Pat Bay in the sunshine for our final "Honk-fest".
- Post-strike, we were able to help over 50 struggling members with no-interest loans from our new office savings account totaling over \$90,000. In addition, thanks to the diligence of our Treasurer, Elaine Ting, we have deposited repayments twice a month all year with barely a hitch, and should have the New Office Savings account replenished by the time you receive this newsletter.
- We welcomed over a dozen new members into the BCTF and STA at our fall Induction Ceremony at the Brentwood Lodge and Spa, expertly organized by Luanne Marchand with support from Audrey and Sally.
- We were able (eventually!) to correct errors and omissions related to the settlement cheques for over 50 members.
- We sponsored and organized (along with COPACS) two all-candidates meetings for School Board candidates that – I like to think – helped raise the profile of the election and helped elect an engaged and progressive new Board. While some of the members are new, and there are certainly things we wish they would or could do that they haven't or can't, there has been much more openness and willingness to work together on issues this year, which is encouraging.
- In terms of training the next generation of teachers to carry forward the work of the Association, we held several training seminars for ProD reps, Staff reps, New teachers, and TTOCs. We elected four delegates to the BCTF AGM in March who had never been before, and just last month, we added 3 member-at-large positions to the Exec Committee, and promptly elected 7 new members to the Exec, including 3 TTOCs.
- Holly Mair with the support of her ProD committee was able – in a very short period of time – manifest and spearhead a pilot Mentorship project in Saanich. Holly will be attending the UBC

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – CONTINUED

Summer Institute on Mentorship in order to help carry the success of this program forward into next year and beyond.

- Over the course of the year, we managed to achieve a number of just and positive outcomes for teachers, either through the grievance process, or without having to resort to the grievance process.
- We have also been able to help a number of teachers access the services they needed in order to be either healthy at work (or healthy off work), whether that was through the Health and Wellness or short-term/long-term disability programs available through the BCTF or the Employee/Family Assistance Program made available by SD63 and the STA.

There are more things I could add, too. It's crazy to think back and realize that the meeting at the Mary Winspear centre was this year. I find stepping aside from the day to day for a moment is sometimes hard to do, but it's always worth it to gain a bit of perspective.

Well, I would wager that you are looking forward to a summer's worth of perspective, because I know I am. For those of you who might need some help or support, though, don't worry: I will still be around and available to help on email, although the STA office will be closed after the first week of July until the last week of August. Best of luck with all the wrapping up activities of June, and if I don't hear from you or see you at a grad or awards ceremony, or the retirement banquet, have a restful summer and we'll see you in September.

☺ Mark

Article C.4 and the Wacky World of Experience Credit Silos

When I started drafting my newsletter about a week ago, I was dreading having to tell you about how the new TTOC experience credit will work.

Actually, that doesn't quite capture it: I was apoplectic with frustration at both BCPSEA and BCTF. Luckily, in my dogged attempts to figure out whether Paul Standring and I were interpreting the news coming from BCPSEA and BCTF correctly, it turns out that it isn't quite as bad as we thought. Nevertheless, all TTOCs and junior teachers are going to want to pay close attention:

Experience Credit (which is used to decide when you move up the salary grid) used to be governed by B.27 in our contract, and it still is for contract work. The B.27 language says that once you earn the equivalent of 8 months full time work, you are owed an increment, to be credited the next September 1 or January 1, whichever comes next. We had a grievance in Saanich years ago that resulted in TTOCs having access to the same language, and which clarified that anything between 160 and 200 days was enough for an increment, but you would only carry forward unused days over 200.

This last bargaining round, the provincial parties bargained C.4, which gave TTOCs everywhere in BC experience credit (not every local had it). C.4 says that 170 days is the threshold for an increment, but you get credit the very next month.

This was all fine, until we learned that BCPSEA was of the opinion that contract experience and TTOC experience were to be earned and accrued in separate banks, or "silos", and originally they didn't want to allow any movement of experience from one silo to the other.

I'll let that sink in for a minute.

So, effective this past April, Districts are meant to be granting credit for TTOC work in a C.4 silo (even if you are a PT teacher) and granting credit for contract work in a B.27 silo. The BCTF was only successful in getting

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – CONTINUED

BCPSEA to move a little: they agreed to allow teachers to request that experience be moved from the TTOC silo to the contract silo, but only in that direction, only twice a year, and only in increments of whole months.

There is SOOO much to explain about this that I won't go into all the details in this newsletter. I can tell you, though, that:

- Once you have earned an increment, it is yours and will be used for any work that you do, TTOC work or contract, the only exception being the new cap of Category 5/7 for TTOC work. (This was a huge relief to me... the alternative would have been unimaginably bad)
- Paul Standing and I are working on details that will be important for you to know, including how teachers will get access to what is in each of their two "silos" (hopefully on the earnings statement), and clarification of when an increment can be triggered,
- Once we have that information, it is our intention to have a workshop or meeting for TTOCs and junior teachers, to not only explain the process, but (from my perspective) to offer advice on how best to manage it to get your increment as soon as possible.

So, keep your ear to the ground for some kind of workshop on this. Alternatively, once I get confirmation from Paul on how it will work operationally in HR/Payroll, I will put together a sheet that explains the process and gives advice.

Dental Opt-in and Orthodontics

IF YOU ARE ABOUT TO ARRANGE ORTHODONTICS, STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND READ THIS. Seriously.

Our Orthodontics coverage is going up on July 1 significantly. We are currently covered at a rate of 50% to a lifetime maximum of \$2000 per person. This is going up to 75% coverage, up to a lifetime maximum of \$5000 per person.

More importantly, my understanding is that you would NOT be eligible for the new rate if you signed your contract before July 1. (I was hoping that any remaining payments on my own daughter's braces would be reimbursed at the new rate, but no luck – our contract was signed two years ago, and that's what matters apparently.)

End result: it may be a huge advantage to you to postpone the arrangements for orthodontics until after July 1. At any rate, you should be aware of the change in coverage so that you can check with your own orthodontist about the new rates and how they will be dealing with it. It may be that some offices might know about our impending increase from other customers and will advise you accordingly, but you can't assume that they will.

Planning for 2015/16 Startup

One of the challenges the STA faces year after year is getting started in September.

All of you have your own classes to prep for and set-up, and your own school-wide issues to attend to, let alone those of you who have either moved schools or are still trying to secure work.

Nevertheless, our organizational structure and our ability to get things done depends upon having some key people in place from the outset. This can be a challenge because our positions are all elected positions that require waiting until a meeting that takes place after the year has begun.

Although this is likely your current practice anyway, I won't take anything for granted, and I would request that if you are currently acting as a staff rep, pro-D rep, staff committee chair in your school that you continue to act in that capacity until an election takes place in the fall for that position.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – CONTINUED

If you know that you will not be back in the school for one reason or another, please make sure before you leave in June that there is someone to act on your behalf in the interim, and please let the STA office know who that will be.

One of the key things that often gets missed at the beginning of the year is our contractually protected right to jointly establish how staff meetings will run for the year (see D.22 below).

ARTICLE D.22 STAFF MEETINGS

D.22.1 Staff Meetings held under the authority of School Act Regulation shall be in the form of monthly school staff meetings and emergent school staff meetings.

D.22.2 At the start of each school year, the Principal shall consult with the school staff or the school staff committee to jointly determine procedures and guidelines for monthly and emergent school staff meetings. These procedures and guidelines shall address matters such as: agenda setting, circulation of agendas, frequency of meetings, place, duration, notice and procedures for absences from the meeting. Once determined, these matters will be outlined and copies distributed to each staff member by October 1 of each year.

D.22.3 Regular school staff meetings which are additional to the monthly staff meetings shall be scheduled only with the agreement of the staff through the process described in clause D.22.2.

D.22.4 With the exception of school startup at the beginning of each school year or semester change, regular school staff meetings will be limited to one and one half hours after the meeting is called to order.

D.22.5 Summary notes of the meetings, including a list of those in attendance at the meeting, shall be written, circulated to all staff members and retained in the school.

D.22.6 Teachers are responsible for being informed about the business of staff meetings.

So, things that should be attended to before we leave for the summer include:

- Making sure there is continuity for staff reps, PD reps, Health & Safety Reps, Staff Committee Chairs, etc., into September
- Ensuring that someone from Staff Committee is available in September to exercise your right to establish staff meeting routines jointly with the principal
- Making sure the staff is all on the same page for any August pro-D that might be occurring and that everyone is aware of their rights with respect to Pro-D
- Consulting with the principal on the Education Fund this June, and arranging a follow-up meeting to allocate the remainder in September

If your school does not have a Staff Committee, please contact me through your staff rep or through the STA office. We can share different models from different schools to help you get yours up and running.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – CONTINUED

Changes to Pension Plan

On a positive note, one of the things we do well with the government is to co-manage our pension plan.

As part of their regular review of pensions and their performance, the Pension Board is recommending a significant change to teachers, which is to de-link the calculation of both pension contributions and payments from the CPP. I won't get into the details here other than to let you know that there will be a presentation on this at a general meeting in the fall (either Oct 7th or Nov 4th after school), and that nothing will change without the approval of the membership.

Given that the single largest asset that any of us owns is our pension – yes, more than your house – it would be a good idea to set aside the time to attend this meeting.

Best wishes to Sally

Last month we said hello to Jazz Harding, who has joined the STA Office. This month we say goodbye and thank you to Sally Glen, who has served the members of the STA diligently for 15 years.

Although Sally retires at the end of June, she will remain on our on-call list in case there are days when Audrey or Jazz cannot work. We are sure that we will see Sally around, but nevertheless we will miss her, and we wish her all the best in her retirement. If you wish to thank Sally in person, please drop by the office, or come to the STA retirement banquet on June 18th at the Beach House.

Local Representatives' Report

by Don Peterson & Colin Plant



On Friday May 29th and Saturday May 30th, Don and Colin attended the third and final BCTF Representative Assembly of the 2014/15 school year. Mark Skanks also attends the meeting as our President, but does not have voting cards. We do discuss the issues as they arise and we tend to share our thoughts on an issue with each other before voting.

The main business of this meeting is to pass the budget for the 2015/16 school year but we also conducted elections for various BCTF positions, debated emergent issues and dealt with the resolutions that were not finished at the AGM. We also had a discussion about the BCTF's 5-Year Plan. You will be asked to provide feedback in the future on the plan.

Some of the other things that we covered during our two-day meeting:

- We received a Legal Update on our application to seek leave to the Supreme Court of Canada.
- Discussed how we will be asking for input from members on potential changes to the Pension Plan this fall.
- We received an update on the MyEducation BC, the replacement for BCESIS.
- We had a presentation encouraging teachers to engage in the fall 2015 election campaign.
- An update on the Teachers Council.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – CONTINUED

At the March BCTF AGM, the annual fee was passed as being 1.79% of salary. This was the same amount as the current year. The good news is that the 2015/16 budget we passed at the RA will have 1.9-3.9 in surplus depending on whether or not we are required to return the \$2 million award that was part of the Justice Griffin ruling that was overturned by the BC Supreme Court of Appeals.

So what is new in the budget? Well, we are returning to starting the AGM on the Saturday afternoon instead of the evening. We also are having a third Judicial Council meeting this year instead of only two. The third major change was the president's release grant given to larger locals. There was some consideration about only locals with less than 1000 getting the grant, but the meeting felt all locals should receive this. This would be a continuation of the current status quo.

Regarding elections at the RA and some Saanich connections: Don Peterson was re-elected to being the RA Ombudsperson and Steve Jones was re-elected to the Judicial Council.

As Don and Colin were both re-elected as Local Representatives for the 2015-16 school year, you will continue to see our reports in this newsletter. If you ever have any questions about the Representative Assembly or the role your Local Representatives play, please email Don or Colin.

Professional Development Report

by Holly Mair



June Farewells

This June we say goodbye to three longtime Professional Development Representatives. First, Helga Robson from Royal Oak Middle School is retiring. Helga has supported teachers' professional development in many ways. She has volunteered to be the school-based PD rep at Royal Oak for approximately 15 years in total and has facilitated various sessions for teachers. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with Helga and am going to miss her. Second, we are saying a temporary farewell to Catherine Robillard. Catherine has taken a leave of absence from the district and I sincerely hope we see her back the following year. Catherine has been the school-based rep for North Saanich Middle School and has also served as the middle school rep on the Joint PD Committee in recent years. And finally, we say goodbye to Rae Dennett. Rae has been the school-based PD Rep at CDC and a member of the Joint PD Committee for many years. Rae will be starting a new chapter in her career as VP at KELSET Elementary. Best of luck to these amazing colleagues and thank you to all for supporting PD in the district!

Summer Reminders

If you are planning on partaking in professional development over the summer, keep in mind the following:

- The STA will not be processing reimbursements in the summer. Please hang onto your receipts until September.
- Any PD event that takes place after July 1st, must be taken out of your next year's PD allotment. If you are going to be teaching at a different school next year, please make sure you understand the PD policy of the school you are going to. If you need help with that, all PD reps are listed on the STA website as are most of the school-based policies. Feel free to contact the rep for information.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT – CONTINUED

- The STA cannot grant you lieu time for attending a summer event. All lieu time requests need to be made to your administration. Keep in mind that the majority of lieu time approvals are for events that include the whole staff and very few are granted for individual events.
- Summer PD opportunities are being posted on at www.saanichteachers.com (PD link) as I receive them.

As we tie up the school year, please make sure you get any last minute **reimbursement requests to the STA Office no later than Friday June 12**. This will give us two weeks to ensure you get your reimbursement before the end of the school year. Also double check your reimbursement package to ensure it is complete and your forms are signed. Incomplete packages take longer to process as we then have to contact you to sort it out.



Program Report

by Luanne Marchand

YOU'RE INVITED!

STA / SAA RETIREMENT BANQUET

Thursday, JUNE 18, 2015

We are pleased to invite you to the Annual Retirement Banquet for teachers and administrators in the Saanich School District

The Beachhouse Restaurant
5109 Cordova Bay Road
Victoria, BC

Please make cheques payable to:
Saanich Teachers' Association

and mail /drop off to:

6843 Central Saanich Rd
Victoria, BC
V8Z 5V4

Deadline: June 12, 2015

5:00 p.m. No Host Bar
5:30 Opening Remarks
Dinner 6:30 p.m.

RSVP to Audrey Hayes
staoffice@saanichteachers.com

or
STA office 778-426-1426

Tickets are \$25.00 each

Contest

Congratulations to Clint Surry and Joan Trill for correctly answering that our STA retirement banquet is being held on June 18th at the Beach House Restaurant in Cordova Bay. Each will receive a \$25 gift card to Starbucks. Thanks to the 25 teachers who entered the contest. Not bad odds, eh?

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](https://twitter.com/BCTF63)

Phone us:

778-426-1426

Our mailing address is:

6843 Central Saanich Road Victoria BC V8Z 5V4



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

Newsletter Editors:
[Colin Plant](#) & [Angie Savage](#)



IMPORTANT DATES FOR STA TEACHERS

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

DATES

Brentwood Elementary	Oct 16	Nov 5	Nov 6	Feb 24
Cordova Bay Elementary	Oct 28	Oct 29	Oct 30	Feb 11
Deep Cove Elementary	Oct 22	Oct 23	Nov 20	Feb 26
Keating Elementary	Nov 4	Nov 5	Nov 6	Mar 3
KELSET Elementary	Oct 7	Oct 9	Nov 19	Apr 1
Lochside Elementary	Nov 4	Nov 5	Nov 6	Feb 26
Prospect Lake Elementary	Oct 8	Oct 9	Feb 18	Feb 19
Sidney Elementary	Oct 8	Oct 9	Nov 20	Mar 5
Bayside Middle	Oct 15	Oct 16	Feb 12	May 21
North Saanich Middle	Oct 8	Oct 9	Feb 4	Mar 6
Royal Oak Middle	Oct 28	Oct 29	Feb 4	May 28
Claremont Secondary	Oct 2	Nov 27	Feb 5	Apr 30
Parkland Secondary	Oct 2	Dec 4	Feb 26	May 7
Stelly's Secondary	Oct 2	Nov 27	Feb 25	Apr 29

ALL SCHOOLS (TWO WEEK SPRING BREAK IMPLEMENTED)

Friday, October 24, 2014	Province Wide
Friday, November 7, 2014	School Based
Monday November 10, 2014	School Based
Friday, February 20, 2015	Individual (Province Wide)
Friday, April 24, 2015	School Planning Day
Monday, May 4, 2015	School Based

LAST DAY OF CLASSES: FRIDAY JUNE 26TH (Not that we are counting)