



TACKBOARD

President's Message

"The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails."

John Maxwell



Thank you to all the members who came out to the AGM on Tuesday, May 19 at Eric Hamber School. It was a good turnout and we were pleased to see this participatory democracy in action. A general meeting and particularly an Annual General Meeting is the

sovereign decision making body of this organization and important decisions around budget, direction of the union and elections should be discussed by a significant percentage of the membership. That was achieved this year. Yet the measures we have taken to improve communication to get information out and receive input from our members have perhaps served more to undermine the need for members to come to meetings than to encourage them. As the "digital natives" enter the teaching profession there is a call for more extensive and more effective use of technology using the internet and the various digital sites as a source of information and communication tool. We have re-vamped our website and regularly update it and would like to make it the "Go to" spot for our members, a site you'll feel able to check on a daily (or at least weekly basis) for important updates. Can any of these activities however take the place of face to face discussion and debate in a setting where the diverse experience of teaching in Vancouver is reflected? The BCTF is also wrestling with these issues around member on-line voting and digital communication. It is a debate worth having and any thoughts or suggestions would be appreciated.

Thank you to the membership for their support of my presidency for another year and I am pleased to be joined by Debbie Pawluk as First Vice-President and Shaun van der Hoop as 2nd VP for next year. We have also elected an outstanding Executive

Committee who advise and provide member input to the table officers and I want to congratulate all of them as well and to welcome the new members of Executive, Young Cheng (Point Grey), Mary Filleul (District Learning Services), Susan McIntosh (Gladstone), Carollyne Ramsey (Templeton), and Christine Stewart (Britannia), to the team.

The next three weeks will see the new post and fill process come into fruition with the 4 posting periods. Check with your staff reps or this office if you have any issues or concerns. We will be monitoring the efficacy of this new language and the process with Human Resources and the Board for next year.

As always, June will be an extremely busy month as we wrap up the the 2008/09 school year. Take time to enjoy the almost summer like weather, pace yourselves and enjoy your well-deserved summer break. "Luxe, calme et volupte" (Baudelaire)

Anne

New Rules for Field Trips/ Studies

All members need to make sure they have familiarized themselves with the new policies on Field Trips/Studies before planning, financing and communicating with students and parents.

These will be finalized and in place for September 2009. The proposed changes to the regulations will be distributed at May's council meeting and finalized at the Board level in June. Principals will also have the complete documentation on the Revised Field Studies Policy.

TOC Workshop Employment Insurance Seminar

Tuesday, June 9th, 2009

4:00-6:00 pm

VSTA Office

2915 Commercial Drive

This seminar will help teachers teaching on call understand the steps to follow to apply for EI benefits. Facilitator: Penny Galbraith. RSVP by June 5 to Kim at kim@vstaweb or 604-873-5570.

Translink Employer Pass Program (EPP)

Since September 2008, the Employer Pass Program, a program offered by Translink to encourage greater use of public transit by employees within the Greater Vancouver Region, has been available to VBE 10-month employees on salary or continuing contract to participate in the program. To enroll, employees complete an *Employee Enrolment Contract* and forward it to the EPP coordinator, along with a cheque for \$15.00 payable to Translink. A copy is given to payroll as authorization to start deductions. The enrolment deadline is approximately 6 weeks prior to the intended start date, so employees wishing to start in September are advised to enroll in June. Employees terminating the program are required to give one month's notice. Employees participating in the program receive a personalized, non-transferable transit pass at a discounted rate of approximately 15% less than the cost of purchasing monthly passes. Because 10-month employees do not receive pay during the months of July and August, VSB will pro-rate the 12 month cost of the pass over the 10-month school year through monthly deductions. The pass is valid over the 12-month period, including the summer months.

Annual General Meeting

The VSTA Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday, May 19th at the Hamber auditorium. Members voted in favour of a recommendation from the Executive Committee to increase members' fees from .69% to .73% in order to finance the increase in FTE of the third table officer from .57 FTE to 1.0. The General Meeting also approved the association's operating budget for 2009-10, and elected the VSTA Executive Committee for 2009-10.

Congratulations to the following newly acclaimed and elected members of the 2009-2010 Executive Committee:

President	Anne Guthrie Warman
1 st Vice President	Debbie Pawluk (TEMP)
2 nd Vice President	Shaun van der Hoop
Treasurer	Moira Ekdahl (DLS)
Local Representatives to the BCTF	Rory Brown (VT) Sylvia Metzner (JO) Anne Guthrie Warman
Members-at-Large	Victor Choy (WC) Mary Filleul (DLS) Susan Gallpen (TEMP) Susan McIntosh (GLAD) Raza Mirani (GLAD) Lisa Pacheco (GLAD) Mark Reid (VT) Christine Stewart (BRIT)
Teacher on Call Rep	Young Cheng (PG)
<i>Standing Committee Chairs</i>	
Professional Development	Brin McIntyre (TEMP)
W/LC & Bargaining	Carollyne Ramsey (TEMP)
Health & Safety	Louis Jefferson (WC)
Social & Eco-Justice	Rosalind Kellett (EH)

We wish to extend our thanks to the 2008-09 Executive Committee for their dedication and countless hours of service over the past year. To those Executive members who will not be returning next year, thank you for all of your hard work on behalf of Vancouver secondary teachers. We wish the following outgoing members of the Executive Committee all the best in their next endeavours.

Treena Goolieff (EH)	Perry Mathias (VLN)
Peter Hill (UH)	Shirlene Shelfontiuk (VT)
Gena Kolson (KITS)	Shelley Sullivan (DT)

Also, special recognition and thanks were given to Marcy Toms (Templeton) for her dedication and long time service to the Association. We wish Marcy the very best of health and happiness in her retirement.

School Union Team Elections

As per established practice, elections for members of the VSTA School Union Team take place in the spring, or in the case of a school that expects significant staff changes, in the following September. Elections should take place at a Staff Organization Meeting and contested positions must be determined by secret ballot. Even if only one person is nominated or has volunteered for a position, it is important that s/he be openly acclaimed by the meeting. The School Union Team consists of:

- One (1) Staff Rep for every 25 teachers or fraction thereof on staff
- One (1) Staff Rep for parent contact
- Professional Development Chairperson (who will also represent the school on the VSTA Pro-D Committee)
- Up to two (2) Reps to the VSTA Working and Learning Conditions/Bargaining Committee (who will also represent the school on the VSTA WLC/B Committee)
- One (1) Rep to the VSTA Health and Safety Committee (who will also represent the school on the VSTA Health and Safety Committee)
- One (1) Rep to the VSTA Social & Eco Justice Committee (who will also represent the school on the VSTA Social & Eco Justice Committee)
- Staff Committee Chairperson (unless a school's Staff Committee Constitution specifies that Staff Committee elects its own chair. In either case, the Staff Committee Chairperson is a member of the School Union Team).

Members of the VSTA Executive (from the school) are also considered to be members of the School Union Team. Additionally, members of the School Union Team are reminded that VSTA provides a budget to the team of \$2.00 per member to facilitate meetings of the Team and/or Staff Organization meetings.

Central Drop Off for Job Applications

For this year's spring transfer process, once again the VSTA and the VBE will each have a central drop off to receive applications, *except* for the French Immersion postings. All teachers applying for positions *may* deliver their applications directly to schools or to the central drop off, but those applying for French Immersion positions *must send or deliver applications directly to the school* for which they are applying.

Drop-off at the VSTA will be located at the VSTA office, 2915 Commercial Dr. (at 13th Ave.) on the following Wednesdays from 7:30am - 6:00pm: **June 03, June 10 & June 17.**

Friday Absences

Teachers are reminded that they *must report a full day's absence* when away on the shortened Friday, even when they have prep in the last block. The only exception to this would be reporting a half-day's absence for the first *two* blocks of a Friday morning.

Summer Interview Committees

Summer postings will be taking place from August 18th to the 24th, and school interview committees will need to be convened to conduct these interviews. The VSTA position is that the school union representative on the interview committee *must* have attended the post-and-fill training provided at the April *School Union Rep Training* session. If none of your school's reps will be available for August interviews, please contact the VSTA office to arrange for a table officer to conduct the interviews. A limited amount of compensatory "time-in-lieu" will be made available by the VSTA for those staff reps who conduct August interviews.



Anne joins VESTA Flying Squad at Canucks game to raise awareness of Education Issues before election.

VSTA Retirees' Dinner

Members retiring this June or who retired earlier this year are invited, along with one guest, to the annual VSTA Retirees' Dinner on June 23rd at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. Also invited are VSTA staff reps, as well as standing committee reps, and members of the executive. Personalized invitations will be sent to schools in the first week of June. Please mark the date on your calendar to ensure that you won't miss this sumptuous event! RVSP by June 12th to Mo (mo@vstaweb.ca) or Kim (kim@vstaweb.ca) or call 604-873-5570.

Early Retirement Incentive Plan Deadline

Deadline for application is May 30th. (Article C.1.1 in the Collective Agreement)



Anne can't think in her overcrowded classroom.
(VESTA Flying Squad, May 9/09)

Retiring This Year?

CHECK LIST

- Contact the Teachers' Pension Plan at 1-800-665-6770 for a Retirement Application Package. Send the completed application form to the TPP no later than the end of the month in which the pension is to start (preferably at least two months earlier) to ensure prompt pension payment.
- By May 31st, send in your letter of resignation to your school board, with a copy to your local teachers' union/association office.
- Contact VBE payroll to find out when your current health benefits end to ensure you have continuous coverage until the benefits associated with the Teachers' Pension Plan begin.
- Consider converting your current group life insurance to an individual life insurance policy.
- Join the BC Retired Teachers' Association (telephone 604-871-2260/2262 or 1-877-683-2243, or go to the web site at www.bctf.ca/rta). Contact the BCRTA re: starting/continuing Medoc travel health insurance. The Retired Teachers' Association has branches around the province. There are many advantages to membership, and you can have the annual \$35 fee deducted directly from your pension.
- Apply to the BCTF for Associate Membership.
- Maintain membership in the BC College of Teachers as a non-practising member on pension or as practising member if you intend to teach after retirement. For fee details visit www.bcct.ca.
- At age 60, if you are not working, consider applying for your Canada Pension Plan pension. For an application kit, visit the CPP web site at www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/cpp/cpptoc.shtml.
- At age 65, apply for Old Age Security (OAS). For an application kit, visit the OAS web site at www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/oas/oastoc.shtml

Contact the BCTF Income Security Staff if you have questions related to any of the above. Phone: 604-871-1921; toll-free 1-800-663-9163, ext. 1921.