



# TACKBOARD

*The monthly newsletter of the Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association*

## Message from the office

**Congratulations** to Vancouver Secondary teachers on making it to the end of a tumultuous year. In good news, we find ourselves with a ratified Collective Agreement – in large part due to the efforts of many of you to apply pressure to elected officials. While our class size/class composition provisions have been hard hit by the outcome of the Jackson arbitration, the BCTF was successful in keeping superior provisions intact. Clearly, these will be issues to consider in our next round of bargaining.

We want to acknowledge the incredible work that teachers have done to adapt to emergency remote learning. The consequences of the pandemic have taken a toll on everyone – whether it be for personal familial reasons, for pedagogical reasons, or for the loss of an in-person school community. The VSTA has lobbied the Board for a week of in-service at the beginning of the school year to support teachers in continuing to work in a hybrid fashion.

The VSTA recognizes that the global discussion around systemic racism is essential to making change in our public school system. We have teachers and students who continue to feel unwelcome and marginalized in our schools due to their background. All of us have our own work to do in terms of reflecting on our place in the world and what we can do to contribute to ending racism. We have requested in-service from the Board and more resources to support teachers in working with students. The VSTA will be conducting a member engagement/equity scan this fall to find out what barriers teachers face in schools and within the Union in terms of engagement.

The VSTA/VESTA building redevelopment project is

progressing. We are on track to submit a completed rezoning application in early July with a view to receiving feedback from City planners over the summer and presenting a recommendation to our respective memberships early in the new school year.

Although we hope your Summer is filled with relaxation and very few commitments, please do mark a few dates in your calendar. The Summer Posting Period will take place **August 18-24** and should you require medical accommodation for September the employer will begin to accept requests **August 15<sup>th</sup>**. These applications will require updated medical, and can be submitted to [leaves@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:leaves@vsb.bc.ca).

Due to COVID 19, we are unable to hold our annual Retirees' Dinner. Please congratulate the Graduating Class of 2020 with us. We wish all of our Retirees the best of luck. We want to thank them for their years of service to public education in Vancouver.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of our School Union Teams for the support that they have provided all of us throughout this challenging year. We could not have imagined in September where we find ourselves now – nor could we have imagined the challenges that Staff and Committee Reps would need to contend with to help reach this point.



Terry, Treena, Katharine

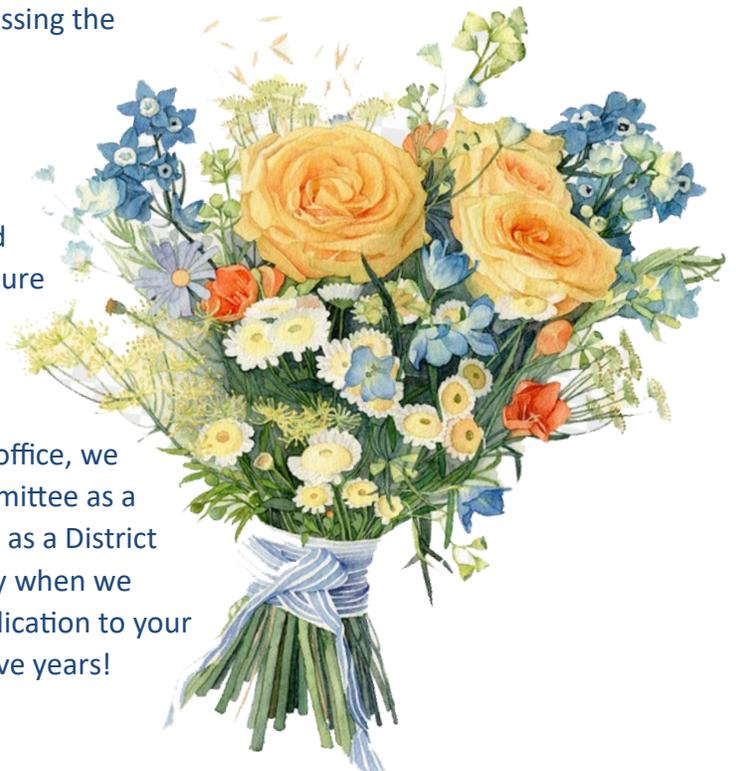


July 31<sup>st</sup> will mark the end of Katharine’s third term as President and the culmination of five years in our office serving teachers and advancing the interests of public education. Throughout her tenure, she has tirelessly and gracefully contended with issues ranging from the routine to matters for which there are no easy solutions, matters that will continue to challenge the Association and BCTF.

Katharine’s dedication to the Association’s interests far exceeds our expectations for the role of President. It seems like it was a long time ago however, back when we thought that the biggest challenge that this year would bring would be the negotiation of our provincial collective agreement. Katharine signed up as a delegate to the NDP convention and bore the expense of a three day trip to Victoria for the sole purpose of pressing the interests of teachers and public education in the Government’s agenda.

Katharine is known to comment that “there are no normal years in the VSTA office” – little did we know at the outset of this year, how true that would be. In the face of COVID-19, Katharine’s work to ensure that the office continued to function and that teachers are supported commenced in the week prior to Spring Break and continues to this day.

While we will miss her day to day counsel in the office, we look forward to working with her on Executive Committee as a Local Rep and take consolation that, in her new role as a District Teacher Librarian, she will be only a phone call away when we need her advice. Thank-you, Katharine, for your dedication to your work as an In-House Table Officer over these past five years!



# Congratulations!

*to the Graduating class of 2020!*



While we are unable to hold our Annual VSTA Retirees' Dinner, we want nonetheless to thank all of our retiring colleagues for their years of work and commitment to the Vancouver public education system. These colleagues have been on strike, participated in job action and fought hard in other ways for the benefits and rights that the rest of us are now able to enjoy, such as an indexed pension and class size/class composition. They have also spent countless hours prepping courses, marking, coaching, chairing meetings, attending meetings, mentoring, organizing field trips, and meeting with parents.

When September comes and the rest of us are having anxiety induced dreams about not being able to find our lesson plans or our classrooms, the Retiring Class of 2020 will be sleeping in, enjoying coffee and the newspaper and doing whatever they feel like doing. We of course may see some of them returning as Limited TTOCs, as these days no one seems to retire from the VSB, but this time, it will be on their terms.

We wish these members the best in their future endeavours and hope that they will stay in touch with us. Congratulations on a job well done!

Marc Barre

Wendy Beamish

Roxanne Bean

Sandy Benson

Ann Bolton

Melanie Clay-Smith

Aldina da Silva

Denise Davis

Andrea Des Mazes

Elizabeth Eisner

Giti Faizabadi

Trevor Gibbens

Lee Green

Mary-Margaret Jackson

Nancy Kartsonas

Gregory Kosman

Rocky Locke

Belinda MacKinnon

James McCabe

Susan McIntosh

Barbara Mingo

Kathleen Nicholson

Brigitte Patenaude

Heidi Peltzer

Frances Renzullo-Cuzzetto

Marilyn Snell

*Mary Lee Taylor*

Alex Vera

Gary Vine

Roger Willan



## Marc Barre

29 yrs teaching experience  
Tupper

Began my career at Tupper in 1987 as an SSW. Returned to U.B.C. Teacher College where I completed my Education Degree. I then began teaching for the VSB in 1990. Too many fine students and highlights to list. I would instead like to thank the school community, my P.E. friends, and especially the many Tupper students taught along the way. Now off to Nova Scotia to enjoy some East Coast Living.



## Wendy Beamish

31 yrs teaching experience  
John Oliver; Elementary schools: Memorial,  
Kitchener, Southlands, Mt Pleasant

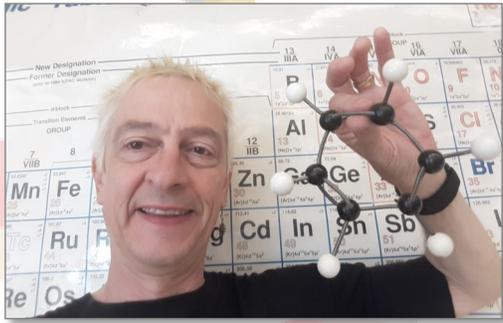
Teaching has been all about empowering students. Working with elementary school students was a joy. The 19 years that I taught at John Oliver is where I learned a lot through teaching a wide array of classes. My main speciality areas have been English, Media Arts, and Special Education, but I also taught Journalism, and much more. Close to my heart is the JO Moto: "Virtus Vincit" (Courage Conquers All).



## Roxanne Bean

37 yrs teaching experience  
Gladstone, Okanagan School District

It has been my pleasure to work with the many amazing students, staff and families of each of the districts in which I have worked. I was always very appreciative and thankful for the many opportunities I was given in Career Programs, PE, Applied Skills and summer/night school administration. I will miss everyone and the fun we had while working hard and doing our best.



## Sandy Benson

26 yrs teaching experience  
Byng, Point Grey, Churchill

Teaching has been a job that I have not minded getting up in the morning for. I have never said "I don't want to go to work today!" I always tried to

think of the best way to get an idea across to the students, and it gave me great pleasure and satisfaction when I saw that they "got it." I'm looking forward to my new job of being retired.

## Ann Bolton

35 yrs teaching experience  
Thompson, Hamber, Vancouver Technical

I look forward to retirement and all the opportunities and experiences it will provide! I have appreciated my colleagues and will cherish the amazing memories and special times we have shared over the years. Highlights include summer school barbecues in the courtyard at DT, Counselling Dept Head meetings and the pleasure of watching students develop confidence as progressed from grades 8-12. Cheers!



## Melanie Clay-Smith

20 yrs teaching experience  
Point Grey, Windermere

Retirement plans just took a different route with my husband's, Geoffrey's, fall, and resulting quadriplegia. Our cruise to Norway at the end of June was on hold due to the pandemic, and now is because of health. It's lucky I have retired, as I will be quite busy adjusting to the new way of life this situation requires of us. Once we find our way, we hope to travel again, and enjoy life.





## **Aldina da Silva**

29 yrs teaching experience  
Thompson, Champlain Heights Elementary

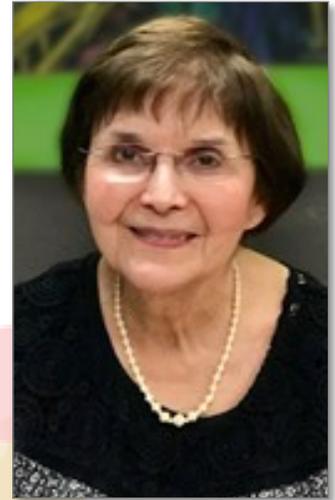
A sense of humour has always helped me in teaching.  
I will miss sharing a laugh with my students and my colleagues.



## **Denise Davis**

46 yrs teaching experience  
Hamber, Windermere  
Elementary schools: Renfrew, Oakridge,  
Mc Bride Annex

Denise has worked in Life Skills at Hamber since 2009.  
She taught Special Ed at Windermere Secondary for  
more than 10 years and she worked in VSB for 46  
years and she is an avid gardener.



## **Andrea Des Mazes**

25 yrs teaching experience  
Magee, Perm TTOC, John Oliver, Point Grey , Churchill

Wish everyone a safe and healthy journey through  
these very challenging times.



## Elizabeth Eisner

34 yrs teaching experience  
Thompson

The one thing I thought I would not miss about teaching would be the marking of compositions; however, that has been replaced by the virtual classroom. I echo what so many students have said: "I miss school!" where the warmth of community and the sounds of life echo everywhere. My years at David Thompson are filled with a wealth of treasured memories created with and by colleagues and students alike.

## Giti Faizabadi

22 yrs teaching experience  
Kitsilano, Byng, TTOC

Having taught several generations of students over the span of 22 years at VSB, I'm retiring with a bundle of rewarding memories and great experiences. It has been a rich journey indeed, but now I have greater things ahead of me: travelling, hiking and mountaineering, some baking and a lot of thinking. And most importantly, spending more time with my loved ones.



## Lee Green

14 yrs teaching experience  
Thompson, Prince of Wales

I came to teaching late after travel in the fashion industry, Culinary school and chef on a yacht. I returned to school at 49 to complete a Bachelor of Applied Design, BED, & a Graduate Certificate - to find a glorious position as Culinary Arts teacher at DT Caf teaching Professional Cook Level one to passionate young cooks, loved the Carrot Club and built a quarter acre school farm garden with Fresh Roots.





## Mary-Margaret Jackson

30 yrs teaching experience  
Kitsilano, PW, Magee  
Burnaby North-Kensington, Sutherland

Never was I going to be a teacher.  
“Try it” mother said. That was 1974!

I discovered a whole new world, fueled by teenage hormones, and it was good!  
Each moment worth a story, a memory, a passion! How can I describe that in this little space?!

## Nancy Kartsonas

31.5 yrs teaching experience  
Hamber, University Hill, Killarney,  
Cook Elementary, Japan

I have had a great career doing what I loved every day.  
I started off in Japan, then Cook Elem, Killarney, University Hill then Eric Hamber. Along the way I met many dedicated and exceptional teachers, counsellors and administrators. I would like to wish all of the retirees good health and happiness. All the best.



## Gregory Kosman

45 yrs teaching experience  
Byng, Kitsilano, Thompson, Windermere, Magee

My future plans are to spend time with my family, read, renovate, and garden.





## Barb Mingo

29 yrs teaching experience  
Kitsilano, Templeton

I look forward to lots of wilderness adventures on mountain bikes, skis, in kayaks and by foot; all with my husband and daughters. Plans that take us to the Arctic.

## Kathy Nicholson

41 yrs teaching experience  
Churchill, Banting Jr. (Coquitlam), Mission Jr. (Mission)

I will miss the infectious energy and enthusiasm of so many students and the cooperation of colleagues. I love that I can keep in touch with so many of them.

I won't miss marks, computer issues and politics. Plans include continuing to volunteer, keeping fit, travels (when allowed), so many hobbies, and really just enjoying life at a slower pace. Thank you to all who added to my fulfilling journey.



## Brigitte Patenaude

29 yrs. Teaching experience  
Windermere, Prince of Wales Mini, Hastings Elementary

Brigitte retires from Windermere where she has spent the last 7 years as a school counsellor. Previously, she taught French at Prince of Wales; beginning in French Immersion at Hastings Elem., imported along with a group of francophones from across Canada who have remained friends to this day. It has been an enriching experience working with wonderful students, colleagues and admin over the years!





## Frances Renzullo-Cuzzetto

36 yrs teaching experience  
Vancouver Technical  
Elementary: Hastings, Tillicum

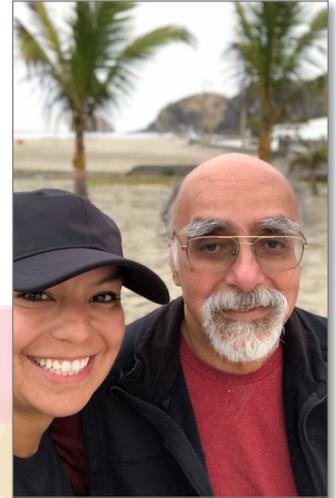
Years ago, I received a card from the parents of one of my French

Immersion Kindergarten classes. The words were simple, "22 children have blossomed in your care." I was touched by those words and to this day, I remember them. Now that I reflect on my time as a classroom teacher, resource teacher and teacher-librarian, I realize I am the one who has blossomed in all of their care. I am simply grateful.

## Alex Vera

24 yrs teaching experience  
Templeton Mini

Best time/highlight trip to Peruvian Amazon and Cuzco/Machu Picchu with grade 10 students. Plans to spend more time with family/grandchildren, travel. Will miss those "AHA" moments by the kids, and intellectual challenge by the students. Favourite anecdotes discovering one of the most talented artists in one of my grade 8 Mini School classes.



## Roger Willan

31 yrs teaching experience  
Vancouver Technical, Britannia

Future plans are to travel, cook, and exercise more. Favorite quote "While one person hesitates because he feels inferior; the other is busy making mistakes and becoming superior." ..Henry C. Link. I will definitely not miss marking lab reports!





IN MEMORIAM

**Mary Lee Taylor**

27 yrs teaching experience  
Magee, Britannia

Mary Lee's kind heart, generous spirit, and love of family were a blessing to all. She had a passion for teaching and touched the lives of countless students and staff, teaching them much more than chemistry and mathematics. She was an unpretentious bringer of joy. We will miss her gracious smile.

