

President's Message



LET ME BEGIN by offering our heartfelt thanks to each and every teacher who found the time to participate in the recent round of school visits. Rory, Sylvia, and I essentially "blitzed" the district, visiting 20 sites in just over a week with the express intent of updating our members on a multiplicity of emergent issues. Mainly due to the

herculean efforts of our staff reps and executive members, the meetings were extremely well attended; subsequently, we have been provided with a wealth of invaluable feedback and advice which will guide our actions at the bargaining table, the upcoming BCTF Representative Assembly and our day-to-day conversations and negotiations with the employer. Knowing that our members are invested and engaged speaks to the overall efficacy and healthiness of our association, as well as the potential strength that naturally evolves from having a vibrant and informed collective.

That the local is listening to our (very engaged) membership was clearly evidenced at the VTF General Meeting on February 21st. Close to a thousand teachers packed the auditorium at Tupper to discuss the proposed school calendar for 2014/15, to make clear their preference for an extended spring break. Informative presentations were made (both by VESTA and VSTA) regarding the alternate calendar and its negative impact on our teachers on call, the most egregious examples being no increase in the daily rate (despite working a longer day) and six fewer days for potential callout. While the VTF has been successful in seeking some improvements for our TTOCs (i.e. aggregate service calculations), there is still much work to be done to ensure that *all* of our members are supported. In the meantime, I would like to thank everyone, regardless of how you voted, for being part of our participatory democracy and for exercising your franchise in a respectful, collegial manner. The proposed calendar is now in the hands of the trustees; and, if adopted (after one month of public consultation), the 2014/15 calendar proposal will be submitted to the MOE by March 31 for final approval.

Our school visits also provided members with an update on the state of bargaining, both locally and provincially. As you are aware, the local table is still "open" albeit we have reached impasse on post and fill (see bargaining bulletins from June and November, 2013). Clearly, the VTF is disappointed with this "reality," particularly since the mid-contract modification has proven extremely successful for the past 5 years. As of today, there are only 2 days left on the table for local bargaining. Updates will be forwarded to members as they develop. In

VTF GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, February 4, 2014

4pm at Tupper Auditorium

Agenda: PROVINCIAL BARGAINING

Please make every effort to attend this important meeting.

terms of provincial bargaining, confidential updates are posted in the BCTF portal, in addition to the complete list of "tabled" proposals (both BCTF and BCPSEA). The particulars that define the BCTF slogan—*"A fair deal for our members, better support for kids"*—are clearly outlined and include such items as improvements to class size/composition, benefits, and a cost of living/salary increase (our last increase was in July 2010). It is *critical* that all members engage with the bargaining process, that we work collectively to pay close attention and to continue networking with our colleagues and the public to put pressure on the provincial government to bargain in good faith, to ensure that we achieve a negotiated agreement. Bargaining will be discussed at the upcoming BCTF Rep Assembly (January 31 and February 1) and your Local Reps (Trish Mugford, Christine Stewart, and I) will be in attendance to voice your views and vote on your behalf. The outcome of the Rep Assembly will be shared immediately with all BCTF members upon its completion so set your awareness meter on "high" and stay tuned for breaking developments. Mark your calendars and plan to attend the VTF General Meeting on February 4.

I also wish to remind you of the budgetary challenges facing public education in general and Vancouver in particular. The VSB is projecting a funding shortfall of \$28 million for 2014/2015, this in addition to the \$47 million in district spending cuts over the past decade. Calculations indicate that despite the government's increase in funding (\$74 million more than a decade ago), net cost increases total \$117 million; therefore, the district would need approximately \$40 million in additional funding in order to maintain the same level of service *as we had 10 years ago*. Preliminary budget proposals will be presented on April 8 and we anticipate, once again, that teachers will face layoffs in large numbers.

In closing this month, teachers are strongly encouraged, once again, to access the BCTF Members' Only Portal for the most recent bargaining updates. Additionally, please ensure that both your Staff Rep and the VSTA office have your current contact information, including a non-VSB email address. Lastly, please make every effort to attend upcoming local union meetings in order to stay informed about the issues that affect our personal and professional well-being.

Take care,

Debbie

BCTF Conference for New Teachers,
Student Teachers, and New TTOCs
Nurturing the Love of Teaching
February 28—March 1, 2014

Radisson Hotel, 8181 Cambie Road, Richmond

Conference registration information and program available on the BCTF website bctf.ca/NewTeachersConference2014/
For registration info, contact Cecilia Huard de la Marre
chuarddelamarre@bctf.ca 604-871-1869.

April 10-11, 2014

Teacher Mentorship BC presents...

Teacher Mentorship: A Provincial Conversation

Bringing together BC educators to support beginning teachers

April 10 4-8:30pm Registration & Dinner—Provincial Panel
April 11 8-3pm Plenary Workshop with Lois Zachary



Feature Presenter: Lois J. Zachary

Lois J. Zachary is internationally recognized for her work on mentoring and has been cited as “one of the top 100 minds in leadership” today. Her bestselling books include *The Mentor’s Guide* (2nd Ed. 2012) as well as *Creating a Mentor Culture* (2005).

THANKS to everyone who put their name forward.

VSTA DELEGATION for the **2014 BCTF AGM** is:

Roxanne Bean (GLAD), Michael-Don Borason (VT), Rory Brown (VSTA), Chas Desjarlais (BRIT), Lindsay Donaldson (VT), Darren Gock (PW), Treena Goolieff (EH), Kim Leary (BRIT), Phil Lee (VT), Katie Leung (DT), Brad Lloyd (PG), Sylvia Metzner (VSTA), Nancy Palejko (PW), Bal Panasar (EH), Petr Pospisil (KITS), John Silver (VT/JO), Terry Stanway (VT), Tobey Steeves (KITS), Chris Wong (GLAD) with Jillian Maguire (KITS) and Shannon Less (BRIT) elected as alternates.



Residential Schools & Reconciliation Workshops

Vancouver, Coast Plaza Hotel & Suites

February 28—Grade 10-12

Educators and administrators from both public schools and First Nations schools in BC are invited to join upcoming Residential Schools and Reconciliation Workshops in Vancouver. The workshops are intended to share the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) & First Nations Schools Association’s (FNSA) draft Teacher Resource Guides and invite feedback from educators to develop the resources. Find a link to event details and online registration at www.fnesc.ca/fpl.

Factor 90 or 65 yrs of age? Don't Wait



You can save the long-term fee (approx. 1.2%) from the date you reach age 64 or Factor '88'.

Members are no longer entitled to long-term benefits under the Salary Indemnity Plan once they hit Factor 90 (age plus cumulative service) or age 65. As the BCTF does not have access to your personal pension information, it is up to you to apply to withdraw from LTD.

How and when to apply

A member who has attained age 64, or has reached factor '88' or is in receipt of a retirement pension under a registered pension plan, may **voluntarily** withdraw from the long-term portion of the Salary Indemnity Plan. In making application for withdrawal, you should ensure that in the event of serious illness or accident you have sufficient accumulated sick leave which, when combined with 120 days of benefit from SIP short-term, will protect your salary to the end of the month in which you reach factor “90” or the end of the month you attain age 65, whichever comes first.

Applications are available online at:

bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/SalaryBenefits/SIP/LT-withdrawalForm.pdf or call the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921.



(L-R) VTF General Meeting, 2014-JAN-21; Rosalyn Best (KITS) & Rosalind Kellett (EH); Shannon Less (BRIT); Anne Sander (BRIT) & Brad Lloyd (PG), at General Meeting—2014-JAN-28

Did you know?

When first introduced in 1940, the Unemployment Insurance Act **did not** include maternity leave. Maternity leave as we currently understand it was first introduced in BC in 1966. Five years later, the federal government followed suit, amending the *Canada Labour Code*. By 1971, mothers with at least 20 weeks of insurable earnings could claim up to 15 weeks of benefits through the Unemployment Insurance system (now Employment Insurance). The last significant change came in January 2001, expanding parental leave from 10 weeks to the 35 weeks that we enjoy today.



VTF perspective

Of significance to Vancouver teachers is that the current VTF Maternity S.U.B. Plan was not introduced into the Collective Agreement until 1991 (1990-92 CA). This original plan included a 60% payment for the two week EI (then UI) waiting period and full pay top up for up to a further 15 weeks. Effective 1994 (1993-96 CA), this payment for the waiting period was increased to the 95% that we enjoy today.

2013-14 CLASS SIZE & COMPOSITION: the numbers at a glance

Very disturbing statistics were recently released by the Ministry of Education on this school year's class size and composition information provided by the 60 school boards across the province. British Columbia is second worst in terms of per-student funding at \$1,000 less than the national average. Only PEI is doing worse. The numbers shouldn't come as a surprise to Vancouver teachers, as disheartening as they are. Across B.C., the number of classes with 4 or more students with designated special needs (entitled to an IEP) increased from **9,559** in 2006-07 to **16,163** in 2013-14. This school year, there are **6,004** classes with 4 IEP students, **3,879** classes with 5 IEP students, **2,405** classes with 6 IEP students and a whopping **3,875** classes with 7 or more IEP students. In Vancouver, the numbers retell the same sad story. As of October 15, there were **986** secondary classes with 4 or more students entitled to an IEP. This number does not include classes exempted from class size regulations such as Performing Arts, Music, Planning, etc. Compounded with cuts to specialist teachers like teacher-librarians, ELL teachers, special education teachers and counsellors, the learning environment and working environment for students and teachers is not what it once was. After more than a decade of cuts to provincial education budgets, BC has lost 1,400 specialist teachers since 2002, even as the need for their services has gone up significantly. Close to 700 special education teachers, over 100 counsellors, and 300 teacher-librarians have all been cut from the system.



Got Paid Maternity Leave? Thank a Postal Worker!

(or What individual unions have accomplished that benefits us all!)



In 1981, I moved to Vancouver and began working at Canada Post as I planned the next phase of my life. Little did I suspect that my employment there would see me engaged in a controversial 6 week strike as a member of CUPW (Canadian Union of Postal Workers).

As CUPW went into bargaining that year, the union argued paid maternity leave was essential to eliminate the injustice suffered by female workers who were forced to take a substantial loss in pay for childbirth and the period following it. CUPW's position, allied with the national Status of Women Committee, argued that women shouldn't have to pay a penalty for being the ones in society who bear children.

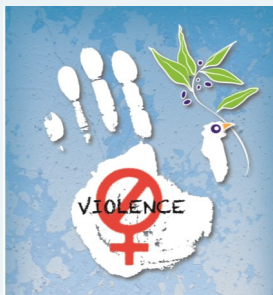
While I was young and single, I knew that this was a significant social issue. Nowhere in 1981 were there maternity leave benefits in unionized or non-unionized Canadian work places. Treasury Board, the agency we bargained with, was fearful that this might "open the floodgates" for others wanting the same benefit.

Unfortunately, many of our members saw this as a "women's" or a "mother's" issue and long hours were spent walking the line around the building at 349 West Georgia, trying to convince my male (and sometimes female) colleagues of the value of paid maternity leave to them too. After all, we all had families!

In the end CUPW played a pivotal role in changing benefits for all workers, and I am proud to have been part of that struggle. We achieved both 93 cents on the dollar as maternity leave top up to UI benefits and full amount of the wages for the two week UI waiting period. I cannot be certain if the next year saw a baby boom in postal workers'

families. But I do know that now every union in Canada and many non-unionized workers enjoy fully paid maternity (and now paternity) leave benefits because of CUPW's momentous action in 1981 and we can thank a union for making that happen. The employer would never have given it to us.

Mary Filleul, District Learning Services



Wanted!

STUDENT SUBMISSIONS TO IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE

Every day we are inundated with stories and images of violence against women and children, bullying and cyber-bullying, war, gun violence, and the list goes on.

Teachers!

Create a space for students to IMAGINE:

What would a world without violence look like?

This project is dedicated to the memory of the women who lost their lives in the Montreal Massacre December 6, 1989.

All media forms accepted (infographic, 6-second vine, essays, poetry, short stories, film, artwork, poster, cards, etc.)

Submissions should be sent with the subject line

"World without Violence" to sruzic@bctf.ca.

Deadline for submissions is April 30, 2014.



Just a reminder that all BCTF bargaining updates and information is accessible on the BCTF website through the secure MY portal link. This link offers a wealth of information on the progress of bargaining including both BCTF and employer bargaining proposals.



Contact Information: Reminder

It is imperative the VSTA has up-to-date contact information for all our members. Please ensure that the office has your correct:

- * **home address**
- * **phone number**
- * **non-employer email address**

If you have changed schools since last year that information should be updated as well.



Always happy to hear from you!

Debbie, Sylvia, Rory, Kim & Mo

Upcoming Pension Seminars

YOUR PENSION, YOUR FUTURE. This free seminar is aimed towards new- and mid-career plan members. Join us as we explain your pension benefits and help you understand how decisions you make today can impact your future pension income, no matter how far into the future it may be.

Seminar Dates and Locations

MAR 25 Richmond 6-7:30 PM

THINKING ABOUT RETIRING. If you are within 5 years of retirement, then this free seminar is for you. Thinking about retiring and starting your pension may raise many questions for you. We can help you with this period of change.

Spring Seminar Dates and Locations

FEB 1	Vancouver**	APR 15	Burnaby
FEB 15	N. Vancouver**	APR 23	Delta
FEB 18	Richmond	MAY 6	Vancouver
FEB 27	Coquitlam	MAY 8	Surrey
MAR 4	Vancouver		
MAR 26	Langley	Sessions are 6-8 PM unless otherwise indicated	
APR 10	Langley	** 9-11 AM; 12:30-2:30 PM	

Pre-registration is required. Dates and location are subject to change. To view the most current schedule and register online, visit tpp.pensionsbc.ca.



Vancouver & District Labour Council Women's Committee invites you to

CELEBRATING WOMEN Making Change: Idle No More

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2014

Friday, March 7

5:15 pm - Doors

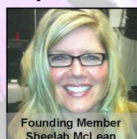
6:15 pm - Dinner

Fraserview Hall

8240 Fraser Street

south of Marine Drive

Speakers: Idle No More



Founding Member
Sheelagh McLean



Activist
Janice Makokis

Entertainment



No Shit Shirleys

Tickets \$45/ \$30 low income (tables of 8)

Primarily a women's event but open to all
ASL interpretation provided

For tickets or childcare assistance contact Keziah at the VDLC office
604-254-0703 or office@vdlc.ca

The VESTA/VSTA Building: A plan for the future

In 1989 VESTA and VSTA acquired the current building at a cost of approximately \$1.3 million. The purchase cost was shared equally by the two associations and they each retain 50% ownership. The building itself was constructed in 1972 and consists of about 19,500 square feet of floor space, of which the VTF occupies approximately one third or 6,000 square feet. The remaining space and parking lot is leased and rented to retail and office tenants who generate revenue to cover operational expenses for the two associations, offsetting the need for revenue from membership fees. A property management company is retained and revenue and expenses related to the building are shared equally between VESTA and VSTA.



The building and site are currently valued at about \$4 million, with most of the market value in the land, not the building. There are significant structural issues with the building and the estimated cost of repairs would be in the range of \$2 million (more than the current value of the building itself). This would not necessarily include bringing the building up to current construction codes.

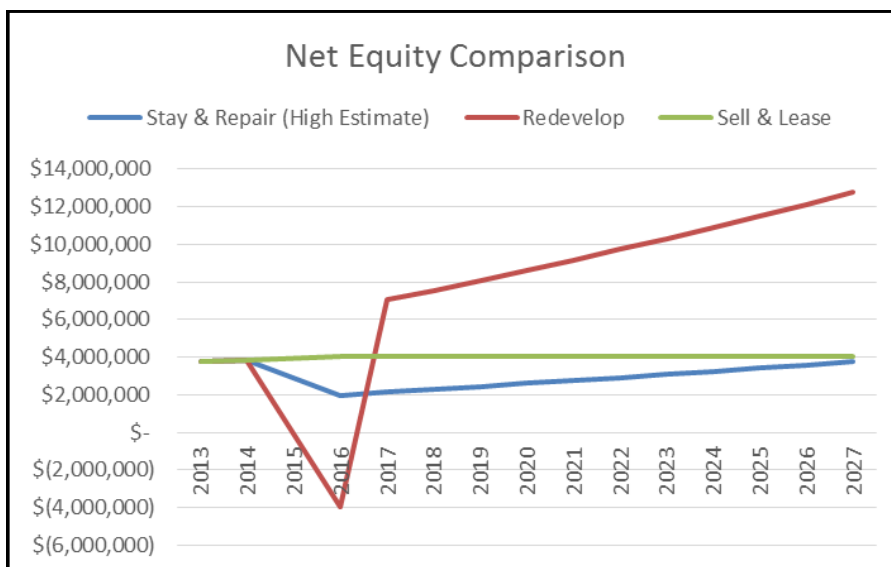
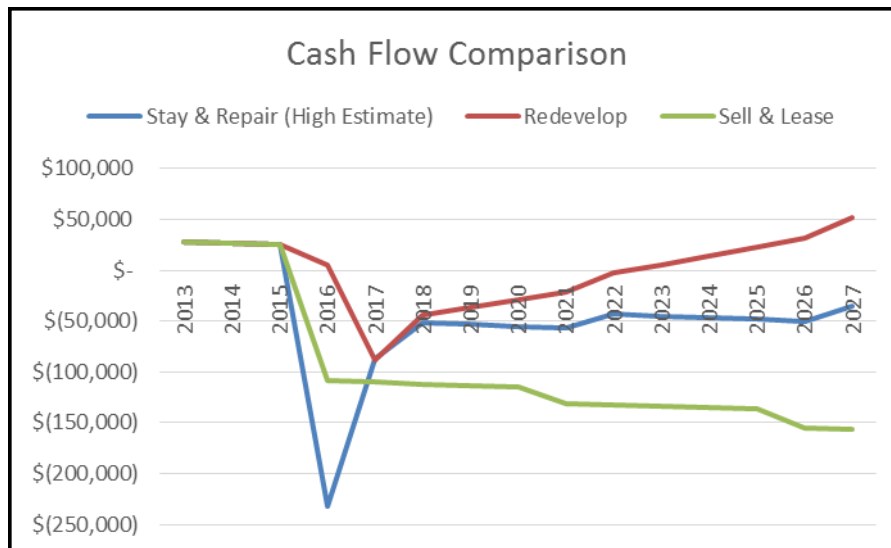
In the fall of 2011 a joint VESTA/VSTA building committee was formed. Following a tendering and shortlisting process Coriolis Consulting Corporation was contracted in late 2012 to complete an analysis. The final report entitled *Office Accommodation and Real Estate Strategy for VSTA and VESTA* was received in late 2013.

In the report, Coriolis was able to identify 5 options to consider that might address the needs of the two organizations. The advantages and disadvantages of these options are summarized in the chart below.

Option:	Disadvantages:	Advantages:
Stay and Repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget uncertainty Poor location for current retail/office combination End result is still an old, poorly designed building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Necessary repairs completed
Sell and Lease on the Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No longer any participation in the real estate market Income earned from investing the proceeds of selling the property would not be adequate to cover rent and operating expenses. Member dues would need to rise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need for additional capital, no real estate risk No need for temporary accommodation No need for property management Ongoing flexibility to change the amount of space or location
Sell and Purchase Elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income earned from investing the proceeds of selling the property would not be adequate to cover rent and operating expenses. Member dues would need to rise Lack of suitable strata title office on the market Small strata title office space has limited potential to appreciate and can be difficult to sell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need for additional capital, no real estate risk No need for temporary accommodation No need for property management Ongoing flexibility to change the amount of space or location
Sell and Purchase Strata in the New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income earned from investing the proceeds of selling the property would not be adequate to cover rent and operating expenses. Member dues would need to rise Small strata title office space has limited potential to appreciate and can be difficult to sell Requires temporary accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need for additional capital, no real estate risk Assured ability to obtain appropriately sized and located space No need for property management Ongoing flexibility to change the amount of space or location
Redevelop with Retail, Office, and Rental Apartments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires construction loan of approximately \$8M Requires temporary accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial growth in cash flow over medium term Substantial increase in net equity Combination of strong cash flow and property value growth puts the VTF in an enviable financial position.

Of paramount importance for the VSTA Executive and IHTOs has been to determine a strategy to address the building concerns which will maintain the equity that has been gained since the purchase of the building, while continuing to provide service to members, and minimize any need to increase fees to members.

The graphs below give an overview of the anticipated financial impact of three main options over a 14 year period. The first graph compares anticipated cash flow for our investment in the building and is relevant when considering how member services are financed and the potential impact on member dues. The second graph compares anticipated net equity and is key to ascertaining which option will best maintain the membership's current investment.



The report was brought to VSTA Executive in November 2013 for consideration and subsequently, the VSTA General Meeting January 28, 2014, where the following recommendations were passed:

THAT the VSTA supports, in principle, redevelopment of our current site, into retail space, office space, and residential rental units.

THAT the VSTA representatives to the VESTA / VSTA Ad Hoc Building Committee enter into pre-development research and planning with the VSTA representatives to this committee.

Despite clear challenges, this is an exciting opportunity to build on the foresight of the VESTA and VSTA executives who made a brave decision in 1989. It will be important that all VSTA members keep themselves informed as we move forward through this process. 