



WEST VANCOUVER Teachers' Association

Vol. 46, no 8 May 2024

Notes from your President – *Spencer Capier*

Dear Colleagues,

Here it is May, already. The school calendar simultaneously keeps me in the moment, and aware of the cyclical nature of our work. I suppose one could think of the job of a teacher is like Sisyphus pushing his boulder up the hill only to see it roll down the other side. I'd rather think our work is like the seasons - ever changing, ever returning. I may have taught *this* lesson in May a few times, but not to *these* kids, in *this* way, maybe with a new perspective.

One thing about teaching, though a day may drag, the years fly by! I started teaching in West Vancouver in 1992 (if you count my practicum). How the heck is it 2024? I began teaching because I didn't want to be a waiter (worst busboy ever to pay the bills between music gigs).

To my surprise I discovered I loved teaching; almost as much as performing. Okay sometimes I loved it even more than performing if getting to the gig required a 12-hour drive in a snowstorm.

I took a part time appointment, and then a full-time appointment a few years later. I had excellent mentors in my early (and not so early) years in the classroom. I made a lot of mistakes. Wiser teachers helped me get better. At some point younger teachers asked me for advice. I found I had something useful to contribute.

Then I remember one morning in the staff room asking myself "where did all the older teachers go?" I realized, they'd all retired, and I was one of the older teachers now - as if the series of staff photos on the wall stretching back decades hadn't provided empirical evidence of my gradual decline!

So that's when I decided I wanted to be the president of the local union. I wanted to be of use to my colleagues like my mentors (many of whom were past presidents) had been to me. I wanted to support teachers who were going through investigations, grieve issues with the employer, and defend and expand the rights of members through bargaining the collective agreement. I of course had NO idea how any of that worked. Also, would I miss the classroom?

I've been in the WVTA office for six years now, three as VP and three as President. Every year I have increased my training and knowledge base for the work of union leadership. This year the BCTF appointed me as a provincial internal mediator. The work is an immense privilege and very meaningful. The years have flown by!

I guess this is a very long way of saying THANK YOU for allowing me to continue to serve the teachers of West Vancouver for another year.

Do I miss the classroom? Yup. I really do. Still more fun than a 12-hour drive in the snow.

In solidarity, Spencer

Join the WVTA Executive Team!

Have you thought about becoming more involved in union leadership? Consider running for the WVTA Executive! We meet once a month on Thursdays at the WVTA office. Positions include:

- Local Representatives to BCTF meetings (2 plus alternate)
- Secretary/Treasurer

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- Pro D Chair (comes with a block of time)
- Social Justice Rep
- Health and Safety Reps (2)
- TTOC Representative,
- Members at Large (4).

If interested, contact our nominating chair [Jessica Selzer](#) by May 22nd. Members can also be nominated from the floor of the AGM.

Speaking of which, coming up is our **Annual General Meeting, May 30th**, 3:45 pm at the Kay Meek Centre. There will be door prizes! There will be a Wine/Beer & Cheese reception in the lobby to follow! Come have a voice in selecting your executive team for next year and socialize with colleagues from around the district.

Notice:

WVTA Annual General Meeting
Thursday, May 30th, 2024
3:45, Kay Meek Theatre

AGENDA

- **Election of WVTA Executive Members** (bring a device for voting)
- **WVTA Updates**

Door Prizes! Stay after the AGM for a Wine and Cheese Social!



WVTA SCHOLARSHIPS

The application form for the **WVTA Scholarship Awards** is available from the WVTA office and at the WVTA web site: www.wvta.ca > Teacher Resources > *Forms for Download*. To be eligible, the June 2024 graduate must be a child or legal ward of an active WVTA member or of a retired member. Two scholarships of \$1000 will be awarded. Deadline for application is August 31, 2024.

District Retirement Reception

Tuesday, June 4, 2024
3:30 – 5:30 pm,
The Atrium at Kay Meek Centre

Join your colleagues and visit with old friends as we celebrate the careers of our District Retirees!

MAY Special Events

Asian Heritage Month

Canadians are invited to learn more about the many achievements and contributions of Canadians of Asian descent who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada the culturally diverse, compassionate, and prosperous nation it is today.” This month is a reminder to come together to combat anti-Asian racism and discrimination in all its forms. Find more about the significant events in history of Canadians of Asian heritage [here](#).

May 17: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

This day was created as worldwide celebration of sexual and gender diversity. Since 2005, May 17th has been dedicated to the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, marking the day in 1990 when the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. <https://may17.org>

May 21 - 24: Aboriginal Awareness Week

This week was first introduced in 1992 “with the purpose of increasing awareness of Aboriginal peoples within the federal public service”. Aboriginal Awareness Week has largely focused on giving federal public servants an opportunity to learn more about the Métis, Inuit and First Nations peoples. Since its beginnings in 1992, Aboriginal Awareness has moved beyond this original mandate to provide meaningful events for the public to explore contemporary indigenous life in Canada.

Teachers interested in incorporating more Aboriginal content in their classrooms are sometimes unsure of where to start and how to find authentic materials. The BCTF has a number of workshops and resources [available on request](#).

SFU SCHOOL ASSOCIATES – FALL 2024

Develop New Teachers. Become a School Associate.

SFU's Faculty of Education, Professional Programs is currently seeking experienced teachers to help mentor our teachers this fall. [School Associates](#) play a pivotal role in our teacher education programs — helping student teachers (our future colleagues) to make sense of the vast and complex world of educational practice during their placement semesters. **If you or someone you know may be interested in collaborating with one of BC's brightest future educators, speak to your administrator or contact SFU's placement team today.**

Most SFU school associates agree that mentoring a student teacher is a professionally enriching experience unlike any other. In addition to receiving up to four transferrable tuition fee credits valued at over \$800, school associates also develop new leadership skills, reflect on their instructional practice, learn the latest educational theories and research, grow their professional community, and attract high-calibre new teachers to their schools.

Most of all, they will be having a profound impact on a future educator.

For more information, contact the placement team at:

Joan Greenlay: sfuedpc@sfu.ca

Janet McCarron: sfuedpm@sfu.ca

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 65 or “Factor 90”.

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

Any member who has attained age 64, or has reached “factor 88” (age plus contributory service), or is in receipt of a retirement pension under another 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 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 and at www.wvta.ca (under Download Forms), or call the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921.

Reminder – you can use any remaining Professional Development funding available from this school year, and/or apply next September to use next year's funding towards this summer's professional development costs.

Applications must be received at the WVTA Office by June 14th to be eligible for funding for this school year.