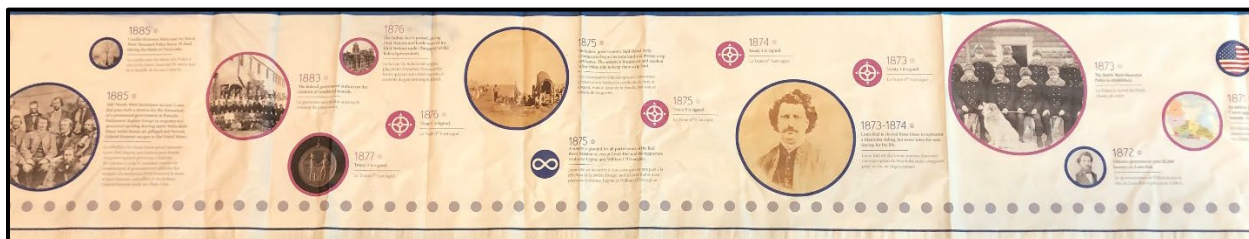


# Cranbrook Chronicles

Newsletter of the Cranbrook District Teachers' Association  
October 2023



*School is a building which has four walls with tomorrow inside. – Lon Watters*

## Vice-President's Message – Larry Dureski

Hello Everyone,

"How's retirement?" – a question I have heard numerous times since June 30. My stock answer was "I don't know". Yes, I did attend retirement parties and a retiree's breakfast at Lance and Bobbi Cuthill's place on the first day of school, but my time has been nowhere near idle. The backpack and hiking poles I selected as a gift from SD5 still await their first trip out the door. Along with family responsibilities and ensuring that Band students have instruments that work at the start of the school year, I had spent a week in UBC dorm accommodation attending Facilitator Institute Training (FIT) for workshop facilitators and the Summer Conference in late August. I was pleased with the attendance at Health and Safety sessions during the elective session day at the conference. Both *Violence in K-12* and *Creating an Effective Health and Safety Culture in the Workplace* had full rooms. Previously, Health and Safety sessions seemed to have low appeal when compared to other elective offerings. Many thanks to Mitch Zuvela and Carol Johns for taking time out of their summers to attend this leadership-building conference.

When I did have time to breathe, it was through a saxophone that was pointed at appreciative crowds. There is fulfillment in doing something that helps others enjoy the moment. In this photo, we were playing at a private party in Turtle Valley. The Scotch Creek wildfire threatened this area, but was spared in the end. Local colleague Gabe Vizcaino joined us for this occasion on guitar (second from left), who has since left SD5 to a new Music teaching position in the North Okanagan. Good luck, Gabe! And, good luck to all of you as we get into another year. I look forward to continuing in the role of your VP, helping in whatever way possible, and bringing information from wherever back home.

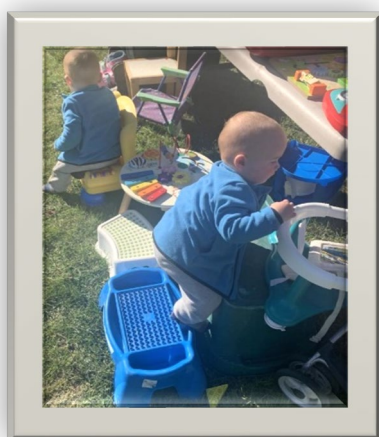


## President's Message – Shelley Balfour

I'm struggling with any good news to share except for the raise we started to receive in September! Thank you to the provincial bargaining team!

This startup has been a difficult one and I think it carried over from the frustrations in the spring, through the summer and then into the fall. There are unfilled jobs, retired teachers waiting to be interviewed for the TTOC list since May, brand new graduates from the EKTEP program waiting to get an interview to TTOC, chaos in the hiring of the new support teachers, daily shortages for TTOCs, investigations that could have been a conversation, 4 arbitrations on the go and many grievances.

I did attend the Reconciliation Walk at Aqam on September 30<sup>th</sup> and walked up to the Crying Hill where we listened to survivors of the residential institution. There was a great turnout despite the rainy, cold weather. We were not prepared for the length of the walk and had the two toddlers with us in the wagon. Next year, we will be better prepared! Here is a photo of the two of them at the Kid's swap on October 1<sup>st</sup> trying out the wares before we bought any. The vendor was very generous in letting the boys play and play and play!



## Report from the BCTF Health and Safety Advisory Committee Meeting – September 22-23 at the BCTF building, third floor.

This time, our nine-member group (HSAC) met with representatives from the Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ) to discuss health and safety issues related to climate change. For example, we have had snow days but taking a heat day is a new concept. The 2021 heat dome and poor air quality caused by wildfire smoke were items of discussion. Recommendations from this discussion included ensuring that standards for indoor air quality and temperature are met (23-26 degrees C in Summer, 20-23 degrees C in Winter with relative humidity between 30 and 60 percent). One problem for workers in portables is that these structures are not subject to the same requirements as permanent buildings. Filtration equipment installed or provided during the pandemic will also work for wildfire smoke by ensuring that the equipment is maintained and filters are changed as per recommended schedule. The idea of sick leave that is related to environmental impacts was another discussion item.

When BCTF Health and Safety workshops go through the process of revisions and updates, a recommendation is to use Social Justice and Climate Change lenses in selecting scenarios and examples.

Acting upon a HSAC recommendation from last spring, the BCTF Graphics Department developed a poster outlining steps following a violent incident. This draft was formatted as a simple check list that a worker could use while in crisis mode. Our committee liked this draft and suggested that it also be published as a wallet card that members can keep with them. Watch for these new resources.

## Report, Report, and Report some more.

Reporting workplace hazards to your administration is the most effective (and required) method of improving the safety of your workplace. Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) 3.10 requires workers to report any unsafe workplace conditions or acts to your site administration:

*Whenever a person **observes what appears to be an unsafe or harmful condition or act** the person must **report it as soon as possible to a supervisor or to the employer, and the person receiving the report must investigate the reported unsafe condition or act and must ensure that any necessary corrective action is taken without delay.***

Just as the employer is required to provide a healthy and safe workplace, workers are required to report potentially unsafe conditions or acts in the workplace to the site supervisor (principal). Reporting to your principal helps your employer address hazards from a preventive standpoint rather than investigating incidents where workers get injured. Physical conditions in the building are probably the easiest to report, as they are the most noticeable. Corrective action without delay may involve traffic cones or flagging tape until arrangements for a more permanent solution are made.

If you witness another worker doing something that may get themselves or another person injured, I would suggest that you talk to that colleague about the potential incident that could result from that act. We are required by the [BCTF Code of Ethics](#), Clause 5, to discuss concerns about a colleague's teaching or related work with that colleague first. However, there is still the WorkSafeBC regulatory obligation to report the unsafe act to a supervisor. If in this situation, make a general report of the act without making reference to specific workers involved. An investigation as to why an unsafe act is being carried out may reveal a lack of tools or supplies needed to do the task in a safe manner. For example, reporting the act of workers standing on classroom furniture to reach heights may reveal a lack of available stepladders without having to identify who was on the furniture. Now that you know this, **please refrain from unsafe actions** that would place you at risk and your safety-conscious colleagues in an awkward situation. If you are trying to change the top of a bulletin board and there are no safe methods available, tell your supervisor. Lack of tools to do the job safely is a workplace condition.

(Photo was staged with safety measures in place.)



## I Need Employee Family Assistance (EFAP)

Homewood EFAP has been hired by SD5 to provide services such as counselling and other mental health supports. Use this [link](#) to access their sign-in page and create an account. When the access code is requested, it is SDN560 for our employee group. Services and access information are also provided on this page of the [CDTA](#) website.



## ***Get Active!* – In a political way.**

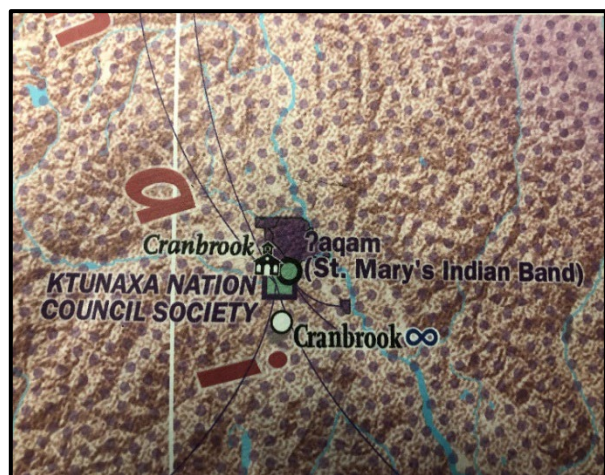
A newly-formed **Political Action Committee** is seeking volunteers to participate in creating plans to address teacher workload, climate change, and equity. Current members of this group are also exploring the offering of Political Action training with Anna Chudnovsky.

Contact Carol Johns at [cjohnsprimary47@gmail.com](mailto:cjohnsprimary47@gmail.com) if interested in this committee and/or the training opportunity.

### **Report from the BCTF Summer Conference** – August 22 to 25 at the UBC Campus

I had the privilege to attend this event along with Mitch Zuvela and Carol Johns. Carol attended as a Political Action Contact, Mitch focused on Bargaining, and I helped facilitate workshops in Health and Safety. Topics offered far exceeded that list, including an introduction to the large floor map resource featuring the Indigenous place names and territories rather than the current political boundaries in Canada. Participants removed their shoes and walked about on this map to find familiar places in the context of Indigenous language groups rather than provincial and territorial boundaries.

For more information about this gym floor-size map and accompanying teachers' guides, check out the [Royal Canadian Geographic Society](http://www.rcgs.ca).





This year, the Social Justice Film Night featured the film *Emergence: Out of the Shadows*, a story of siblings navigating the challenge of expressing their sexuality in a very conservative culture. The story line moves from shock experienced by the parents to acceptance. For the first time at a Social Justice film night, people involved in the featured film were brought in to meet with the audience for a panel discussion after the show. In this case, director Vinay Giridhar (centre) and lead actor Jag Nagra (Right). This film was a first project for Vinay and had earned multiple awards.

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10660510/>

At the plenary session, where all participants gathered in one space, people were asked to raised their hands if this was their first summer conference. More than half of the group raised their hands! Very encouraging to see so many people choosing to get involved in leadership roles. Next year, there will be opportunities for local

committee chairs or alternates to attend.

## Highlights from the September 13<sup>th</sup> Executive Meeting

### Staff Rep Concerns

- 23 new temporary teaching opportunities opened up in SD5 for the coming year. Some schools used a consultation process with staff.
- Last-minute changes in classes and schedules
- Inequitable case load situations
- Staffing shortages include EAs being pulled from supporting classes to do 1:1 work, shortage of Youth Care Workers
- Loss of teaching spaces in some buildings while others have vacant classrooms
- New teachers not getting training in MyEd and have no access to it

**Indigenous Education** – Jenn Doll – Administration met with the Sept. 22 committee and will share plans with Pro-D. Trying to get a book club started with funding support.

**Political Action** – Carol Johns – Attended Summer Conference. Morale survey got a strong response, applying for a grant for a three-year succession plan for teacher needs.

**Social Justice** – Janice Marschner- will be attending the Fall Zone meeting in this capacity next month.

**Health and Safety** – Larry Dureski/Karen Bidder- Both going the Zone meetings in October. The next District Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee meeting will be in late October.

**Pro D** – Cara London & Jenn Doll – A Staff Development meeting will take place October 5<sup>th</sup>.

**TTOC** – Karen Kettenacker – TTOCs were very busy at the start of the year. TTOCs in co-teaching arrangements should be paid for attending the September 22 Pro-D.

**Bargaining** – Mitch Zuvela – Surveys are helpful, and focus groups this year will target the whole teacher demographic.

**Social** – Graeme Mark – There is now CDTA funding for school staff social events. Email Graeme for funding. The TTOC appreciation event last May went well, and another TTOC event will be planned for this year.

**Highlights from the October 4<sup>th</sup> Executive Meeting** – this meeting was done online, as both Shelley and Larry were out of town fulfilling commitments. Thanks to all five local school trustees for attending the committee reports and staff rep concerns part of this meeting.

**Staff Rep Concerns**

- Classes without permanent teachers. Classes at both elementary and secondary having multiple TTOCs.
- Shortage of EAs and TTOCs, unfilled absences.
- Workplace violence incidents.
- Access to MyEd for TTOCs working long-term until permanent placements are made.
- Deer on playgrounds, dead flies on classroom counters.

**Indigenous Education** – Jenn Doll – There was a good turnout for the walk at St. Eugene on Saturday, September 30. The September 22 event had a positive feel, and will be debriefed by the committee.

**Mentorship** – Deleen Adams – there are already four teams this year, and there are several inquiring emails from others exploring this option.



## Last Page Feature – Territorial Land Acknowledgement in Aluminum and Steel

These institutional-looking signs, created by Southern Cheyenne artist Edgar Heap of Birds, were spotted on the UBC campus during the BCTF Summer Conference. Their design was intended to give Indigenous names of places greater clarity than the colonial name assigned to the same land. The twelve signs that dotted the campus were placed in consultation and permission of the Musqueam People, whose lands include UBC and the mouth of the Fraser River.

