Many years ago, I attended a week-long environmental education professional development workshop in a neighbouring province. It wasn’t until a nutritionist gave a talk about the importance of meat in our diet that I clued in—the workshop was sponsored by the coal and beef industries. I demanded equal time and set about showing my fellow attendees the environmental degradation caused by the meat industry.

But ecological destruction is not why I became a vegetarian. I had “converted” after a values clarification seminar at university, during which I discovered that my highest value in life is life itself. I became vegetarian for compassionate reasons—and for 20 years I never encouraged others to take the same path. Even after my research into the air, water, and land pollution caused by the industrialization of meat production, I still saw this dietary choice as a personal one.

For a fascinating look at the silence of the world’s leading environmental organizations on “the most destructive industry facing the planet today” (and that’s saying a lot considering the tragic scar we call the tar sands), check out Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret (www.cowspiracy.com). This film, by Kip Anderson and Keegan Kuhn,
documents “the leading cause of species extinction, ocean ‘dead zones,’ water pollution, desertification, deforestation and habitat loss”—but environmental NGOs won’t touch the issue of meat eating.

It’s been estimated that creating animal protein demands about eight times more fossil fuel than creating a comparable amount of plant protein.

I then learned that the global meat industry is one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases. In 2006, the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (in Livestock’s Long Shadow) noted that animal agriculture and processing is responsible for a whopping 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions (the global transportation sector accounts for 13.5% of total emissions).

It’s been estimated that creating animal protein demands about eight times more fossil fuel than creating a comparable amount of plant protein—and fossil fuel means carbon dioxide. Even worse are animal farming’s emissions of methane and nitrous oxide—both far more potent greenhouse gases than CO2. Here was a way each of us could make a positive difference in the struggle for a viable climate. I realized that, for the sake of today’s children and all future generations, I had to speak up about meat eating as an environmental justice issue.

When I read The World Peace Diet (www.worldpeacediet.org) by Will Tuttle, PhD, I finally came to see meat eating as a wide-reaching social justice issue. Tuttle admits that we have made some gains in protecting our culture’s most vulnerable, but wonders why our progress has been so slow. “The answer to this is on our plates and extends from there to feedlots, slaughterhouses, research laboratories, rodeos, circuses, racetracks, and zoos, to hunting, fishing, and trapping activities, and to prisons, ghettos, wars, and the military-industrial complex and our ongoing rape and destruction of the living world.”

Tuttle explains, “Our capitalistic economic system and its supporting political, legal, and educational institutions still legitimize our commodification and exploitation of animals, [the rest of] nature, and people; our domination of the underprivileged and foreign; and an unequal and unjust distribution of goods based on predation (often euphemized as ‘competition’ and ‘free trade’), oppression, and war.”

So what does meat eating have to do with capitalism?

According to Tuttle, anthropologists believe the connection came about 10,000 years ago in the Kurdish hill country of what is now northeastern Iraq. Nomadic hunters began to attach themselves to particular herds of wild sheep, “culling them and increasingly controlling their mobility, food, and reproductive lives.” Next came the domestication of goats, then cattle, horses, and camels over thousands of years. “Highly charged concepts of property ownership and of male bloodlines and bloodstream purity emerged…For the old herding cultures, confined animals were not just food; they were also wealth, security, and power.”

“The first capitalists,” Tuttle continues, “were the herders who fought each other for land and capital and created kingdoms, complete with slavery, regular warfare, and power concentrated in the lands of a wealthy cattle-owning elite. The first money and form

Fun Fact: New York City recently passed a resolution to encourage all residents to promote Meatless Mondays. Approximately 40 schools in the city have already adopted this resolution. You can read more about this at http://bit.ly/1AwtutE.
of capital were sheep, goats, and cattle, for only they were consumable property with tangible worth. In fact, our word ‘capital’ derives from *capita*, Latin for ‘head,’ as in head of cattle and sheep.”

Tuttle points out that our natural human compassion must be repressed in order to see the animals we dominate as separate and different from us. We learn very early to exclude others. “This exclusivism is necessary to racism, elitism, and war, because in order to harm and dominate other people we must break the bonds that our hearts naturally feel with them. The mentality of domination is necessarily a mentality of exclusion.”


According to Joy, “Eating animals is not simply a matter of personal ethics; it is the inevitable end result of a deeply entrenched, oppressive *ism*. Carnism teaches us to justify eating animals by teaching us to believe that the myths of meat are the facts of meat. There is a vast mythology surrounding meat, but all myths fall in one way or another under the Three Ns of Justification: eating meat is normal, natural, and necessary. And these same myths have been used to justify violent behaviors and beliefs throughout human history, from war to slavery to all forms of bigotry against humans (misogyny, homophobia, etc.). Eating animals is a social justice issue…”

**Wondering what this might mean for you, your teaching, or your school?**

Have students in your class consider the cultural history and unexamined beliefs behind what Joy calls carnism. Start watching for the invisible but entrenched tenets of carnism at your school. Ask for vegan meals in your school cafeteria and at school functions. And sometimes a simple act can have a huge impact...simply saying thank you (aloud) at mealtimes will get others thinking (and feeling) about our relationship with our non-human kin.

Julie is a vegan and a part-time teacher on Pender Island where she works with the Spring Leaves Family Learning program. She is also a sustainability education consultant with GreenHeart Education ([http://www.greenhearted.org/vegetarian-schools.html](http://www.greenhearted.org/vegetarian-schools.html)) and a member of the BCTF’s Environmental Justice Action Group.
The “human” in human rights education: Learning from survivors of WWII in Asia

by Heather Evans, Education Director, BC Association for Learning & Preserving the History of WWII in Asia (ALPHA)

Lee Ok-Seon was born in Korea in 1927 during the Japanese occupation. She was only 14-years-old when she was kidnapped off the street, thrown into the back of a truck, and trafficked to China to serve as a military sex slave for the Imperial Japanese Army. She spent three years as a “comfort woman,” enduring daily rapes, frequent beatings, and other abuses. After the war, she lived in China until 2000, when she returned to Korea to join the survivor-led redress movement. Since then, she’s dedicated her life to giving her testimony locally and internationally, and to lobbying the Japanese government for an official apology. Now, at the age of 87 and with her health rapidly deteriorating, she’s hanging on to a thread of hope that justice will come before her imminent passing.

Yoshio Shinozuka was a Japanese Imperial Army soldier during the Asia-Pacific War. He was conscripted at the age of 16 to serve as an army physician’s assistant with the infamous biological warfare Unit 731, wherein he was involved in conducting experiments and vivisections on Chinese captives. Feeling deep remorse for his involvement in such atrocities, Shinozuka first came forward in 1984 and later gave testimony in 1997 on behalf of 180 Chinese plaintiffs suing the Japanese government for compensation and an apology for deaths of family members killed by Unit 731. He continued to bear witness of the atrocities committed by Unit 731 until he passed away on April 20, 2014, at the age of 90.

At the heart of any social justice or human rights movement are people: people whose rights and dignity have been violated and oppressed, subjugated to the demands and agendas of powerful groups and institutions. It is the stories of these people that call us to awareness and action, both out of empathy and out of our intuitive understanding that injustice for one is injustice for all, and that justice for anyone contributes significantly to justice for everyone. Unfortunately, however, it is often the case that the voices of those for whom justice is being fought get lost amidst the broader political rhetoric once the movement gains momentum.

The survivors of human rights crimes from WWII in Asia are no exception. The now elderly survivors of the “comfort women” system, the Nanking Massacre, biochemical warfare attacks, forced labour, and other crimes against humanity committed by the Imperial Japanese Army have been embroiled in a decades-long redress movement. In recent years the movement has moved further into the spotlight because of regional political struggles related to the (re)militarization of the Asia-Pacific. While several advocacy groups and organizations have worked tirelessly to ensure that the survivors and their demands remain at the forefront of the movement amidst the political upheaval, even they will tell you that it is an uphill battle.

But it is at times like these that we need the survivors’ voices the most. A conversation with any of them reminds us not only of the brutality and inhumanness of war, but of the consequences for us all when human rights and social justice are undermined in times of conflict and supposed peace. Their stories and perspectives cut through all the politics and agendas and bring us to the heart of the matter—people, and their rights to safe, secure, and dignified lives.

We are very fortunate that so many survivors, eyewitnesses, and even former perpetrators of the crimes have come forward to testify to the atrocities and to fight for justice. People such as Lee Ok-Seon and Yoshio Shinozuka have sacrificed much—including their well-being, their reputations, their family and personal relationships, and even sometimes their lives—to bring the truth to light so that future
Teaching the Palestinian-Israeli conflict

by Dr. Samia Shoman, secondary teacher in San Francisco, CA

Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world...would do this, it would change the earth.

–William Faulkner

Last year, one of my former Grade 9/10 students, Natalie, a graduating senior at the time, shared one of her short-answer essay questions for her college applications with me. Here is part of what she wrote:

I was assigned a Palestinian history teacher when I entered high school, and I quickly came to realize that there was more to being Jewish than I knew. Through our Palestinian-Israeli unit, I was exposed to perspectives that made clear that Jews share responsibility for the conflict in the Middle East. This epiphany not only challenged my perception of Jews as perfect, it also made me curious to learn more. Instead of assuming my tolerance of other religions, I became motivated to understand the diversity around me. I decided to make high school the grounds for my investigations. I sought out people with different backgrounds and cultures from my own. My closest friend is Iraqi. By asking questions, thinking twice, and listening attentively to other people’s opinions, I have been able to shed some of my ignorance. The experience has been liberating.

As a Palestinian-American social science teacher, it has no doubt been a challenge to teach the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the most neutral way possible. This is not because I am Palestinian, but because this is not a conflict or war of equals or even between countries, yet as educators we are asked to ensure a balanced curriculum that is equal to both sides, and no matter what I have done to ensure that all sides are represented, there are some people that can never get past the fact that I am a Palestinian.
I have been the target of accusations of using biased materials, and favouring one narrative over the other when teaching this unit. The accusations did not come from my students or their families, rather an outside organization. Because of these accusations, my curriculum has been vetted by numerous outside sources that our district and county office of education consulted. Additionally, the last time I taught this six-week unit, an administrator observed me every single day on directive from our district office. While I was confident in the curriculum and am a veteran teacher, this scrutiny caused a great deal of stress, anxiety, and frustration on my part. There were times when I sat in a bathroom stall at work and cried, times when I understood that what was happening was a microcosm of the greater conflict, and times when I was so inspired by the thoughtfulness of students wrestling with the history and reality of the conflict that I forgot about everything that was happening to me. I know that because of who I am, and the work that I am doing, that I will always be a target of outside groups who think they can use my identity against me and try to influence or veto what I teach. This will not deter me; I am committed to social and global justice, and therefore will always teach this unit.

Because I am Palestinian, I have taken extreme care to present a fair and balanced curriculum representative of multiple perspectives, including the Palestinian one, which is so often left out of traditional textbooks and teaching materials. I do not seek validation from my district or administration that I am successful in doing this, but I do seek it from my students and their families.

Last year, one of my 10th graders, Sophie, wrote me a thank you letter. Part of what she wrote was:

You have inspired me in so many ways and broadened my perspective immensely. Especially when learning about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Going to a Jewish school for 9 years I didn’t even know Palestinians refer to Israel’s Independence as the catastrophe and I was shocked to hear this. I really am glad though that I learned a lot more about the conflict from multiple perspectives. Despite personal connections to either sides, this unit really taught me about the other side I had never learned about and showed me how no one is innocent and both sides need to make sacrifices to move forward. I will not stand by as either side abuses people’s basic rights. One of the most important things I will take away from your class is that in the end we are all human and despite our differences we all deserve our natural rights and be treated with dignity.

I teach students in a two-year loop, meaning I have them as 9th and 10th graders. This unit is our second to last unit during their 10th grade year. When I read things like this, and analyze student work from this unit, I know that students are thinking, empathizing, and most importantly growing. Our school has few Arab students, but the ones who I have taught are proud that for the first time ever, what is being taught about the region is not all negative. Many of them are learning things they never knew or understood about the conflict.

Studying the conflict can be done a variety of ways, but I find that using a multiple narrative approach is the most successful. It challenges students to learn historical content, apply critical thinking skills, and synthesize content and develop critical analysis to complete various assignments throughout the unit, including the final UN conference simulation. In addition, it invites students to come to their own conclusions and truth given the content they have learned, which helps avoid controversy and criticism. It allows educators opportunities to teach students both historical content and important historical thinking skills. My unit has centered on four essential questions on the following page:
1. What factors prevent and promote the creation of a peaceful and just state?
2. Why did the Palestinian-Israeli conflict start; why has it continued; and what are the key issues that must be addressed for it to end?
3. Can multiple and competing narratives be reconciled to achieve peace and security?
4. How does the concept of the “other” play out in this conflict, and in which ways have people on both sides ignored and celebrated the humanity of the “other?”

The rationale behind multiple narratives is the attempt to balance the idea of history as a discipline based on facts, with history as a collection of human experiences and memories often based on a person’s own perspective. Students will be presented with historical facts, as well as be exposed to various Palestinian and Israeli perspectives and narratives around the events that have contributed to the ongoing conflict. The idea is to keep students open to outcomes because, while there are definite historical facts they are expected to learn, there is no other specific conclusion expected from students. Although this often challenges students with close ties to the region or who have previously studied the conflict, I have also experienced that they grow as much or more than other students. The multiple narratives approach creates opportunities for students to synthesize the facts with the perspectives and narratives that they have read and learned about, and come to a truth or multiple truths about the conflict. I attempt to use as many primary source documents and media as possible throughout the unit.

There are two final assessments for the unit; preparing for a United Nations conference on resolving the conflict and developing a product (writing, art, music, etc.) that reflects the student’s truth. The conference is very academic in nature and is not a debate, while the truth assignment is more open-ended and allows students an opportunity to express a conclusion(s) they have come to through the unit. Students do not present their truth projects to the class unless they want to share. They are hung up in class for other students to see.

Toward the end of the unit, I ask students to list the challenges to resolving the conflict. One group of students listed the following:

- On top of the two sides, within each are many other sides (not black and white situation—in history doesn’t seem like there is ever black and white)
- Both sides are indoctrinated by their histories
- Constant cycle of revenge—“If you kill my son, expect your son to be killed.”

These responses reflect the students’ understanding of the complexity of this situation and the human toll it has had on all parties involved. It shows they understand the role that various narratives have in continuing and oftentimes escalating the conflict. The complexity, controversy, and emotional nature of this is what engages students, and should attract educators who are focused on social and global justice, and the humanity of all people, to teach this unit.

Teaching about this conflict can be done. And more importantly, a justice-based approach can be used. Educators and administrators are often concerned that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is taught through a non-biased framework and that both sides of the story are equally represented. As challenging as this can be, when approached through a multiple narratives framework, it is possible to see your students flourish and think, question and engage. You will see and hear them pose statements and questions throughout the unit, come in to talk between classes and during your off periods because they are so perplexed by the situation, and you will feel validated that you have instilled a sense of urgency and humanity in them. The potential for high levels of student engagement, their processing, and ability to draw their own conclusions about arguably the most current and controversial situation in the world should inspire and motivate educators to teach about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

At the spring Representative Assembly of 2010 a motion was carried to direct the BCTF to create a learning resource for Social Justice 12 teachers that explored the Palestine and Israeli conflict in a balanced manner:

That the BCTF support the development of learning resources for Social Justice 12 that will provide teachers with a balanced approach to teaching about peace and justice in the relationship between Israel and Palestine. (May 10 RA, p. 3)

This resource will be ready for teachers this fall. Look for it on TeachBC and the Lesson Plans section of the Peace and Global Educators (PAGE) section of the BCTF Social Justice website.
Developing comprehensive antiracism policies for school districts: Reasons and relevance

by Natalie Wai, Committee for Action on Social Justice, Antiracism Action Group

Subordination and marginalization within institutionalized racism is covert and frequently hidden. This form of racism is often the legacy of white privilege and colonialism where and when racial marginalization is rendered invisible through an assumption of rightness, and the luxury of ignorance within a privileged group that ends up disadvantaging those who do not belong to that group.

Assumption of rightness
Gary Howard (2002) describes how social dominance contributes to achievement gaps and the persistence of educational inequities for children of colour:

For the vast majority of educators who…grew up in predominantly White [middle class] suburban communities, it is logical to assume that the culture and practice of schooling…work well for all students…that our professional judgments are correct…and that those who don’t achieve or don’t perform in ways that are comfortable or familiar to us are either not sufficiently intelligent or inadequately supported by their home environment. (Howard, 2002, pp. 119).

Teachers who grew up in white suburban communities, which are predominantly homogenous environments, can logically assume that their professional judgments are correct. They may believe that the practice of schooling should work well for all types of students, and that students who don’t achieve or don’t perform in ways that are comfortable and familiar to them are either not intelligent and/or not adequately supported by their home environment. As a result, they often blame students and parents rather than looking at school organizations, classroom structures, teaching practices, and policies that potentially continue the marginalization of students and their lack of academic success.

Luxury of ignorance
One of the dilemmas of white dominance is that teachers with power and privilege are often unaware or blind to the demographic advantages that favour their group. Those who remain unaware do not understand the impact of “imagined goodness and [a] narrow sense of normalcy” that is placed upon those who do not share those demographic advantages (Howard, 2002, pp.120). Howard describes this lack of awareness as “the luxury of ignorance.” These teachers see themselves as doing good work by serving “those kids,” but often without connecting emotionally and personally with students’ actual lived experiences (from Delpit, 1996, as referenced in Howard, 2002).

Privilege
Academic or school success is an example of what Howard describes as “the legacy of privilege,” which refers to advantages that flow to some, but not to all, based solely on membership in the dominant group. Howard’s discussion of social dominance is “not for the purpose of casting blame, but with the hope of increasing teachers’ clarity and our consciousness regarding deeper dynamics underlying the achievement gap” (Howard, 2002, pp.121). This framework is important for schools and school districts because teachers and school leaders who
understand how schooling has been shaped by social dominance are more likely to acknowledge “racial and socioeconomic inequities” (Howard, 2002, pp, 121).

**Acknowledging relevance for policy: Addressing institutionalized racial marginalization**

School districts and schools need policies that acknowledge both visible and invisible racial marginalization. There should be professional development to implement the policy for school staff, management, students, and families, so school leaders and teachers are “more likely to work collaboratively and purposefully for personal, professional, and institutional growth” to eliminate achievement gaps and engage all students equitably. In implementing the antiracism policy, school district professional development should also seek to support school programs and curriculum that actively addresses prejudice and discrimination, their historical Canadian roots, and our current context.

**Social justice and equity: Another point in relevance for policy**

On the subject of ethical equity for all students, we need to comprehend the difference between perspectives differentiating justice and critique. Policy, school organization, and teaching and learning practices also depend on, and are influenced by, an understanding of the contrast in ethical paradigms between justice and critique. The role of school policies in the justice paradigm as described by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) serve as guides presenting our societal values that are communal, universal, and shared across cultures. Having an antiracism policy results in justice enacted as fair and equal treatment of all through rationality and analysis. Thus, schools and school board culture guided by this desired policy have procedures to deal with harassment. Restitution and reconciliation processes and practices are developed to address all who are affected by overt and institutionalized racism. Desired employment equity practices and processes are in place for teachers and leadership positions.

Yet justice-based policies, school organizations, and teaching and learning practices that focus on individuals as “singular objects” to be acted upon can also further subordinate already marginalized learners, their families, and school staff. Consequently, a comprehensive antiracism policy that focusses on professional development, school programs and curriculum, school and school-board culture, and procedures for restitution and reconciliation created within structures that potentially favour those with power and privilege, should be carefully and critically analyzed by all educators for “inconsistencies, formulat[ing] the hard questions, debat[ing] and challeng[ing] issues…of social class, race, gender, and other areas of difference, such as: Who dominates? Who makes the rules? Who benefits…Who has the power? Who are the silenced voices? (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005, pp. 14-16).

Howard’s framework helps us to understand why we need to examine current policies and organizational structures that guide school communities and culture, not only from the viewpoint of rationality and fairness, but also from a standpoint of critique where we analyze what may be invisible because “we are all socialized into systems of dominance that are highly resistant to change.” (Howard, 2002, pp. 121).

**Commentary**

In spring 2006, the BCTF passed Resolution 41.A.21: 
*That local teacher unions work with school districts to develop or review antiracism policy and ensure that these policies include a requirement that all racist incidents at school be reported to the district and that action be taken on these incidents.*

Presently, only a handful of school districts have antiracism policies. The Antiacism Action Group of the Committee for Action on Social Justice surveyed 60 school districts through each districts’ school websites, and discovered that less than 10% of our BC school boards have a working antiracism and multicultural policy. Most need more comprehensive detail to address institutionalized racism.


There is an antiracism policy PowerPoint with speaking notes available to use at staff, union, or school board meetings to help you communicate the message that your school district needs a policy, and how to go about doing this. It is available in the member portal at [https://www.bctf.ca/myBCTF/content.aspx?id=36664](https://www.bctf.ca/myBCTF/content.aspx?id=36664).
A sanctuary school policy proposal
by Nassim Elbardough, Sara McGarry, Natalie Mah, and Natalie Wai, Committee for Action on Social Justice Antiracism Group

In 2007, the City of Toronto and their school board adopted a policy to ensure that non-status youth would have a safe place to learn, without fear of being denied entry into school or of being detained while at school.

This is an issue in BC that affects our students. In March 2014, the BCTF Executive Committee approved the following motion:

That the BCTF encourage locals to work with the school boards to adopt a “sanctuary school” policy.

Children and their families have a right to access education without fear of deportation or detainment. Children learn poorly in environments where they are concerned about their security. Schools should be safe and inclusive places of learning.

Members are encouraged to create awareness of the issues facing non-status students by contacting their locals to collaborate and develop a sanctuary school policy for their district. Articles related to this issue and links to the Toronto story are available below:

• http://thetyee.ca/News/2014/07/18/Vancouver-Hidden-Children/
• http://thetyee.ca/News/2014/07/08/Vancouver-Sanctuary-City/.

On the following page is a draft proposal of a sanctuary school policy. It has yet to be adopted by any BC school districts. It is available in the member portal at https://www.bctf.ca/myBCTF/content.aspx?id=36664.

There is a sanctuary school policy PowerPoint with speaking notes available to use at staff, union, or school board meetings to help you communicate the message that your school district needs a policy, and how to go about doing this. It is available in the member portal at https://www.bctf.ca/myBCTF/content.aspx?id=36664.
SANCTUARY SCHOOL POLICY

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To establish the board’s commitment to providing a safe and welcoming environment for its students regardless of immigration status.

2.0 POLICY

2.1. All children who are qualified to be resident pupils of the board, including those who are without immigration status in Canada, shall be entitled to admission to school.

2.2. All children shall be welcomed, regardless of immigration status, and information about them or their families shall not be shared with immigration authorities.

2.3. Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) officials and outside immigration authorities shall be strongly discouraged from entering public schools. All public school employees shall be informed of the board’s commitment toward non-co-operation with the CBSA.

3.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

3.1. The policy and sections 2(1) and 2(2) of the BC Education Act regarding the obligation to admit students without full immigration status will be communicated annually to all school administrators, school office staff, and school teachers. The school will implement admission procedures in accordance with these requirements.

3.2. The board will provide orientation and training for all staff regarding the policy in order to promote expertise and the appropriate degree of sensitivity required concerning the admission of students without immigration status in Canada who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances.

3.3. Where there is a need to verify a student’s name, home address, or date of arrival in Canada, and where the usual documentation is not available, the board will accept letters from lawyers, notaries, and medical doctors confirming their personal knowledge of this information pertaining to the student.

3.4. Schools will continue to comply with current Ministry of Education requirements in the case of students for whom ESL funding claims are made, but will not disseminate students’ personal information.

3.5. All student registration forms, including electronic databases, that refer to immigration status in Canada will have that section removed or deemed strictly confidential. If a student does not provide information regarding immigration status, this student will not be prevented from admission into a school or access to ESL school resources.

3.6. The appropriate instructions for staff and public information materials concerning admission procedures will be revised to reflect the above policy; such revisions will also be included in all training and orientation programs for staff and community agencies that have responsibilities in this area.
As someone who finds First Nations culture and history hugely interesting, I was understandably excited about going on my school's second annual trip to Village Island. Village Island, or 'Mimkwamlis, is the ancestral home of the Mamalilikula people. Though uninhabited today, this island once housed a large-walled village and was many years later the location of the infamous 1921 potlatch that saw 22 men and women sent to prison for practising their culture in violation of the law. The last families who lived there left in 1970, some members of which accompanied this expedition as facilitators.

After an early morning boat ride, a large group of students, staff, and others were gathered on the beach. After greetings and an overview of the day, the three groups were sent on a rotation of four different workshops. The workshop facilitators were welcoming and eager to share their knowledge of both the village site and the people who once lived there. My group started with the Culture and History Workshop, where Chief Arthur Dick and Chief Robert Mountain spoke about the village site and the people who once lived there. Chief Dick, who grew up on the island, also shared some stories from his childhood, some of which were hard for modern-day students like us to imagine. That being said, the things we were told resonated in a way they never could in a classroom, as the distant past doesn't seem quite so distant when you're in the place it occurred. More than any one fact, what I really began to grasp after those talks was just how rich the traditions and history of the people are—far more than could be covered in the brief time we had.

After a chance to wander around the island and enjoy a lunch of local food, as well as listen to some drumming and singing, our group wrapped up the day at the Dance Workshop. And while there was the opportunity to dance, this segment was my favourite of the day for a different reason entirely. The two facilitators, Vera Newman and Andrea Cranmer, opened up to the people assembled as they shared their stories of struggling with adversity, and the legacy that residential schools and other mistreatments have left them and other First Nations people. While the content was heavy, the two also shared their experiences of healing, and discussed the importance of events like this one in creating understanding. Both handled the

Village Island 2014

by Andrew Mitchell, Grade 12 student on Vancouver Island

Arriving at Village Island

Culture and History workshops

John Macko preparing the sockeye salmon

Salmon cooking
difficult subject in a positive way and conveyed an important message—ultimately, it is important to remember the past, but equally so to work to mend its wounds and create a more positive future.

After a group picture and a short walk to the boats, the trip came to a close. Thanks to the efforts of the facilitators, staff, and other volunteers, the event as a whole was a resounding success. While the trip was certainly an educational one, it was so in a way I did not expect. While I learned about Village Island and its history, it was the human elements and the stories that were shared that truly made the day special. I still remember some of the events and facts we were told about, but the messages the facilitators conveyed—of cultural complexity and richness, strength, healing and most importantly, of hope—are ones that will stay with me for many years to come.

This trip was made possible thanks to the following sponsors:

- ‘Namgis Band Council
- Ed May Social Responsibility Fund (BCTF)
- MacKay Whale Watching
- NISS Parent Advisory Council
- Literacy Now
- Silver King Marine Ventures
- Vancouver Island North Teachers’ Association
A teachable moment

by James Sanyshyn, BCTF Executive Committee member-at-large, teacher in Burnaby

It isn’t every day that truth, reconciliation, and First Nations empowerment end up in my French as a Second Language (FSL) classroom. But when it happens, I am inspired.

Our FSL program in Burnaby (Communi-quéte levels 1, 2, and 3) is very good at including First Nations vignettes. In French 10, we study a unit on art forms and the illustrious Bill Reid is one of the write ups. We did the required reading and questions, and I discovered a virtual tour on YouTube of the Bill Reid Museum in Vancouver that I shared with my students. The video featured a beautiful totem pole and, as contextual information, I mentioned that Reid carved the first totem pole raised in the 20th century on Haida Gwaii. My students were perplexed: “Why is that?” they asked me. I was able to remind them that the discriminatory law-of-the-land for many years banned all cultural and religious displays for our First Nations peoples—no wearing of masks, no potlatches, no totems raised. Their faces were as drawn as mine were when at an early age I learned of the systemic destruction of First Nations culture in this country.

I was able to collect my thoughts and asked them to put a trip to Haida Gwaii on their bucket lists, and to think of how powerful Reid’s work must have been after all those years of suppression, oppression, and dominance by government policies. May we always be mindful that our reconciliation work is not yet done, and that a teachable moment is always within our grasp.

You might be interested in booking the following workshops at a school or district Pro-D day:

Indigenous Perspectives (3 hours)
This workshop will explore some of the impacts of colonization on Aboriginal/Indigenous education.
What is Indigenous education? What are the paradigms, and where can we shift?

The Legacy of Residential Schools
This is a new workshop developed by the BCTF to raise awareness and understanding of the legacy of residential schools, including the effects and intergenerational impacts on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. This workshop will:

• provide a preview of resources available.
• provide demonstrations of activities used to teach at various grade levels.
• change attitudes and behaviours—hearts and minds.
• inspire the building of relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people based on mutual understanding, respect, and collective action to create a different future.

To request a workshop, use the workshop request form found at http://bit.ly/1ufgjxl. Include alternate dates, if any.

This Haida bear figure was carved by the Haida artist Bill Reid. It was presented to UBC in 1963 by Walter Koerner and forms part of the permanent collection of the University’s Museum of Anthropology.
Photo credit: Leoboudv
Project L.I.N.K.S: An Ed May Social Responsibility Fund project

by Stephanie Sadownik, former BC teacher and University of Toronto PhD candidate

In December 2012, School District 46 in collaboration with the Sunshine Coast Teachers’ Association Social Justice Committee received an Ed May Social Responsibility Fund grant for their proposal of Project L.I.N.K.S. The grant money was used, with the approval of the Social Justice Committee members and with the approval of the Sunshine Coast School Board, to cover the cost of a teacher teaching on call.

The project was created to meet the transition needs of Grade 7 students entering Chatelech Secondary School from various feeder elementary schools across the Sunshine Coast. A transition day for the Grade 7 students was organized for June 17, 2013. Secondary school students in Grade 11 enrolled at Chatelech and actively engaged in leadership groups or the Gay Straight Alliance, met prior to the transition day with teachers and support staff involved in teaching Grade 8 students in the upcoming year. In an effort to help form bonds with older students working toward developing the ideals of diversity and acceptance in our school, and also to encourage the development of possible future leaders, activities were planned to include a process for dialogue that initiated developing a greater sense of self-acceptance and self-esteem. For example, this was achieved in one activity group through discussions of possible events around bullying and cyber-bullying, while offering assistance and direction for where to go for help if a situation occurs. After the transition day, 77 students completed a survey to reflect on the day, with comments ranging from “awesome” to feeling a bit “shy.” Many of the students felt “nervous about being in a new school” and even a bit “scared they might not make a good impression on the teachers,” or a “fear of the older kids.” Most respondents felt a mix of nervous excitement and a feeling of being unsure of their surroundings.

When the students were asked to consider what caused these feelings, many attributed it to either acknowledging they were the “youngest and the smallest” or simply that it was “already in their head before the day even began.” Some of the girls noted they felt uncomfortable if there were “attractive older boys present.” Most felt uneasy being in a place where they did not know many people.

The students were asked about their perceptions of the purpose of the day, and many noted it was to help them adjust to their new surroundings, to visit or see the school, to understand how the school operated, and to generally help them acclimatize to their new school and teachers. Only a few students saw the potential to meet new friends through the experience. However, many reported by the end of the day they had met someone new.

After the transition day, over 90% of the students reported feeling really good about attending Chatelech in the upcoming year, with a few expanding on that by expressing a feeling of being included and welcomed in the school. A few students suggested “offering more information about the school and where to go” as well as a “tour of outside of the school” and also, “more time to meet new people and socialize.”
This workshop reveals many of the sexualized influences from media and culture on youth relationships. Teachers are provided with options to raise our youth’s awareness around these negative influences in order to seek healthier, more respectful relationships.

The objectives of this workshop are to clarify the meaning and develop a deeper understanding of peace education, and to provide hands-on peace activities for use in the classroom.

This workshop teaches the key principles of communication and how to stand up for yourself in a direct but non-confrontational manner.

Through a variety of student-centred activities, this workshop gives participants new strategies to bring global education into the classroom. Participants will gain a perspective on what global education is, and how to use a global education lens when planning units, to ensure more holistic implementation.

This workshop will demonstrate that environmental education can be integrated across all curriculum subjects and grades. Teachers will be provided with hands-on materials to teach their students to reduce their impact on their environment.

This workshop will help participants understand what is a teachable and controversial issue. They will then learn some key skills and practice teaching strategies to be able to discuss controversial issues with students.

This workshop will help teachers to expand and enhance their teaching strategies for including SJ issues in their K–12 curriculum.

For more complete workshop descriptions, go to our website: https://www.bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx#workshops
To book a workshop, please contact the BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division, 1-800-663-9163, local 1857, or 604-871-1857.
This workshop provides strategies for teachers on how to support children who may be experiencing discrimination at school due to their socioeconomic status.

A follow up to Poverty as a Classroom Issue, participants will become familiar with the realities of childhood poverty in BC and will be provided with the opportunity to examine their individual and collective capacities for facilitating change for children living in poverty.

In this workshop, participants learn how to take a social justice issue and plan a course of action using strategic and analytic tools to maximize success.

In the Bafa Bafa (secondary)/Rafa Rafa (elementary) workshop, participants come to understand the powerful effect that culture plays in every person’s life. They will be motivated to examine stereotypes, rethink their attitudes towards others, and learn how to better relate to and accept people from other genders, ethnic groups, and ages.

This workshop focuses on how to integrate LGBTQ issues into the curriculum in an age-appropriate manner for K−12. Highly recommended for schools wanting to create a school-wide action plan to create an LGBTQ-positive climate for all students.

Participants will examine myths and stereotypes, link oppressions, and understand how they can make their schools safer and more inclusive.

Teachers often feel underprepared to teach sexual health yet there are required outcomes from K-12 in the BC curriculum. Issues such as porn and sexting, violence against women, gender diversity, and sexual orientation are often forgotten in the heteronormative curriculum. This workshop will help you to define what is missing from traditional programs and how to include it in your teaching as well as give you the resources you need to teach sexual health from K-12.

This workshop will help develop an understanding of the risks facing trans* students, as well as the protective factors, gain increased familiarity with terminology used by the trans* communities and increased awareness of gender identity and gender expression. Best practices for supporting a student through gender transition within the school system will be covered. Although the focus is on trans* students, gender inclusive schools help all students to feel safe at school.

This workshop will help to develop self-awareness and empathy building around bullying and bystander issues. Key skills and strategies will be used to identify some of the underlying causes of bullying and help stamp out cyberbullying. Through talking circles and reflective listening activities, ideas will be presented on how to create a safe and inclusive classroom. There will be opportunities to further explore the teacher’s role as an elder and mentor to students.
Since 2011, the year that Burnaby School District’s Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity Policy 5.45 was approved by the board, the district has marched proudly in Vancouver’s annual Pride Parade. The policy ensures that all members of the school community work together in an atmosphere of respect and safety, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and has adopted appropriate administrative regulations and strategies that promote respect for human rights, support diversity, and address discrimination.

To support the objectives set out in this policy, the district created a one-day-a-week position dedicated to LGBTQ issues at the elementary school level. The necessity of this position was determined by results from a teacher survey that indicated additional resource support was required so that teachers could become comfortable with LGBTQ topics in their classrooms.

I was hired to fill this position in the fall of 2014. In my role as an LGBTQ support teacher, I have been visiting elementary schools in Burnaby to role model for teachers how to start conversations and activities that create an awareness and understanding about the diversity of sexual orientations, to respond appropriately to homophobic and transphobic name-calling, and respect human rights.

Family diversity is a more common topic for the primary classes. We talk about “What makes a family?” and discuss things like love, having fun together, caring for one another, and helping one another. I ask students to think of just how many types of families are there? The variety that students generate always amazes me. We clarify words like adopted, foster families, and often have a discussion about how two moms or two dads could have kids. There is always a student in the class who can enlighten her or his peers.

At the intermediate elementary school level, family and gender diversity are discussed. Lesson themes revolve around appreciating diversity. We start by discussing what “appreciating diversity” actually means: showing respect and appreciation for all the ways that we are unique and different from one another. The students are all at different levels of understanding. Some are very aware of the terminology for different sexual orientations and gender identity like gay, lesbian, and trans*. Others are grateful to have their misunderstandings of these terms clarified.

We might also discuss homophobic or transphobic name-calling. We talk about the influence that media and advertising have on us; dictating “normal” interests for girls and “normal” interests for boys such as, “Girls should like pink, boys should play sports.” What if I don’t fit into that “norm?” We discuss words like “stereotype” and forms of discrimination like sexism, racism, and homophobia. Our discussion leads to questions about what our world would be like without these “gender laws?” What if people could pursue their interests, career paths, clothing styles, and hobby choices, without having to conform to these gender “norms?” How would our world be different if boys who wore pink did not have insults like “gay” thrown at them? What if boys could express their emotions without being told to “man up?” What if toys in the “girls section” did not send them messages about living up to unrealistic body images and career paths limited to caregiving, instead of pursuing engineering or the sciences?

Teachers and students have been very receptive to the school visits. The classroom discussions have
Sarah Larsen teaches Grade 4/5 in the Burnaby School District two days a week, and fulfills her one-day-a-week LGBTQ support position. If you would like to contact her for information about discussions or activities that would support a similar policy in your district or workplace, please email her at sarah.larsen@sd41.bc.ca.

BCTF resources can be found at http://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6106.
Discrimination awareness proposition
by Kelsey Carlson, Grade 12 student in Chilliwack

I am a Grade 12 student at Sardis Secondary School in Chilliwack. As a student of the public school system for the past 13 years, I have noticed a deplorable and ignominious habit of discrimination and prejudice among my fellow students. This discrimination usually takes the form of slurs or other forms of verbal abuse, and is targeted toward individuals who are marginalized by their ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, income level, level of physical and/or cognitive ability, or mental illness.

These insensitive slurs, typically thrown around during casual conversations or shouted down the hallways without context, are a product of our society’s lack of awareness about modern-day discrimination. Our provincial school system does an excellent job of educating students about injustices in our past, but many societal barriers that block modern-day Canada from achieving equality remain ignored. Thus, many people tend to imagine that issues such as racism and sexism were permanently eradicated in the 1960s. Despite many studies displaying the implicit discrimination minorities face, many still believe that the modern world is one in which all humans are treated equally. This concept leads some people to use slurs and propagate harmful stereotypes because they believe that an equal society is one in which such speech no longer has negative connotations.

Unfortunately, regardless of the speaker’s intentions, the use of hate speech has many detrimental effects on the school environment and well-being of students. When a student encounters the use of a slur or stereotype that targets part of their identity, this may cause them to feel threatened and unaccepted by their peers. I can speak from personal experience as a female, knowing how intimidated I feel when I hear my peers cultivate hideous gender stereotypes and utter phrases that promote rape culture. The consequences of this hate speech in schools can be extremely severe. For example, I am aware of cases in which LGBTQIA+ students I have known for years felt so threatened by the hateful comments of their peers that they are no longer able to attend public school. When British Columbian teen Amanda Todd was driven to suicide in 2012, one of the factors that influenced the tragedy was the verbal abuse and discrimination she suffered. This blatant use of hate speech by youth has destructive effects on minorities, promoting feelings of fear and intolerance, and causing some youth to limit their activities so they may avoid verbal abuse, or even (in severe cases) to end their own lives.

I am proposing a solution to the use of harmful, prejudicial stereotypes and slurs. A unit concerned with awareness of the negative impact of hate speech and the presence of inequality in modern Canadian society could be added to the current Planning 10 curriculum. Through this mandatory course, all British Columbia students would be required to learn of the repercussions when harmful stereotypes and slurs are used. This program may cause a student to realize a stereotype she or he thought to be funny, is actually a display of intolerance. This realization may influence a student’s decision to refrain from using such language in favour of creating a more accepting school environment. A curriculum change such as this could have more impact than the creation of an elective on this topic, because the majority of students interested in such a course would already understand the presence of prejudice in modern society.

I have created an online petition to gain public support for this endeavour, created through Change.org and it is accessible at http://chn.ge/1DiGFhM.

I would greatly appreciate your support in this campaign so that the youth of our province may be able to learn and live in a safer, more accepting environment, regardless of their background.
Did you know that the BCTF offers free workshops to teachers to help with issues of discrimination in the classroom?

**Youth Relationships in a Sexualized World**
This workshop reveals many of the sexualized influences from media and culture on youth relationships. Teachers are provided with options to raise our youth’s awareness around these negative influences in order to seek healthier, more respectful relationships.

**Responding to Racism through ART and Ally-building**
This is a skills-based workshop on effectively responding to discriminatory remarks and incidents of racism, sexism, and homophobia.

**Breaking the Silence: Understanding and Acting on LGBTQ Issues in Schools**
(3 hours)
(Also available in French)
Start a dialogue within your school or local about LGBTQ issues. This three-hour action-oriented workshop will allow you to examine negative myths and stereotypes, link oppressions, and develop effective strategies to make your school safer and more inclusive. Practical lesson plans and strategies on how to address homophobic/transphobic name-calling will be shared. Find out how homophobia negatively impacts all students in your classroom and how you can educate your students to be change makers.

To book a workshop, please contact the BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division, 1-800-663-9163, local 1857, or 604-871-1857.

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**We Can BC workshops**
*by Pat Keln, Director, We Can End All Violence against Women*

Looking for a way to commemorate International Women’s Day and/or looking for someone to facilitate an interactive antiviolence workshop in your school any time of the year? We Can BC (admin@WeCanBC.ca) would love to connect you to an experienced Violence Is Preventable (VIP) program facilitator in your area to arrange a workshop for your students, families, or staff members.

Tailored to your requirements, your workshop could include the following topics:
- Violence against Women
- Gender Equality
- Healthy Relationships
- Expressive Arts
- Neighbourhood Safety
- Media Literacy
- Child Abuse
- Community Resources
- Teen Dating Violence
- Self-Care Strategies
- Power & Control
- Bullying
- Advocacy
- Safety Planning.

We Can BC’s concern about its limited capacity to facilitate workshops outside of the Greater Vancouver and Prince George areas, and provide immediate outside support for students in need, led to a partnership with the Violence Is Preventable (VIP) program in order to meet the increasing demand for prevention programming in schools across the province. Local VIP sites arrange and facilitate workshops for you and connect children and youth with relevant services.

VIP is a comprehensive strategy for connecting schools, educators, students, and families with Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) counselling programs to improve the health and welfare of children and youth impacted by violence. Co-ordinated provincially by the BC Society of Transition Houses (www.bcsth.ca), VIP has historically been delivered by 36 sites across the province through violence prevention presentations, group interventions, and individual’s counselling. This free, inclusive program helps those affected by violence know that they are not alone, that violence is not their fault, and that community supports are available.

Both We Can BC and the BC Society of Transition Houses have the ultimate goal of ending violence,
in particular violence against women. Bringing VIP to your school can accomplish the following objectives:

- Break the silence of domestic violence by making it safe for children and youth to speak up in schools about family violence and the issues that impact them.
- Increase teacher, school staff, parent, and student awareness about violence in relationships and its effects on child witnesses.
- Empower participants to become personally involved in community social justice initiatives.
- Motivate students and educators to recognize violence in their everyday lives.
- Facilitate partnerships between schools and communities in order to respond to the emotional, social, academic, and psychological needs of children and youth exposed to violence.

For questions about the VIP program and to find out more about service providers near you, contact Andrea Thompson (andrea@bcsth.ca or 604-669-6943, ext 229). Because of limited funds, We Can BC and VIP workshops may not be available in your community. Should that be the case, the We Can BC website (www.WeCanBC.ca) has a number of workshop kits, including one specifically for teachers.

Thinking of arranging an event or having your classroom take a specific action to help end violence against women? They're not just for International Women's Day—you will find 50 ways to help end violence against women and how to plan events under Resources for Change Makers on the We Can website (www.wecanbc.ca/resources/for-change-makers). Both resources include events and actions, from simple to complex, with easy-to-read instructions or links to the same. Make it happen and be part of a movement to change society’s attitudes toward violence against women.

VIP resources are also available on TeachBC: https://teachbcdb.bctf.ca/list?q=VIP&p=1&ps=25

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December 6, 2014: 12th Annual Shoe Memorial

by Pat Kelln, Director, We Can End All Violence against Women

It is just before 8:00 a.m., on December 6, 2014, and for the 12th year in a row we are at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Thanks to the volunteers and the women of UFCW, the stairs are covered with women's and girls' shoes, and boards with the names of women who have been killed in BC are being set up. Thanks to Unifor, a real floral memorial wreath sits proudly overlooking the memorial. Everyone is in a great mood, even though we are in a drenching rain.

Everyone who passes by is huddling under an umbrella or bundled up in warm, water-proof coats. All the volunteers are down on the sidewalk explaining “today is Canada’s National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, this is one of the memorials.” Many people look at the shoes lined up on the stairs: some will just walk by, some will give a quick
nod in understanding and move on, others will stop and take a long look at the memorial, understanding what it means, and some will stop and talk to the volunteers. A gentleman in his sixties stopped, and after a few minutes staring at the memorial was heard to say, “Thank you so very much for doing this!” A few hours later another older man will say the same thing. Many women will stop by to thank us, but this is the first time in 12 years that the memorial has been thanked aloud by men who pass by.

Another young man, in a “very proper suit” crosses behind the information tent to stare at a name board. “My mother’s name is there,” he chokes out. Unable to say more he moves away very quickly. The Vancouver Shoe Memorial touches the lives of many more people than we will ever realize.

December 6 is the Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, when 14 women were singled out and killed because they wanted to be engineers. We Can collects women’s shoes to put on the Vancouver Art Gallery stairs to remind us of the 915 BC women who have been killed by violence since that date.

The shoes represent the names of women and girls who have been killed by violence in this province. The names have been collected from newspapers over the past 25 years, and are listed on 4 foot by 4 foot memorial boards along with the date of their death. At the centre of the stairs is a memorial wreath, a way for us to pay respect for these needless deaths:

Violence against women is a societal problem and we are here so that these women are never forgotten. We wish to remind the public that women are dying needlessly, to answer questions, and to provide information to those who want to be part of ending the violence.

The Vancouver Art Gallery Shoe Memorial offers an opportunity to pay your respects to the many women and girls who have died needlessly and to learn more about what you can do to be a part of ending the violence.

At the end of the day, all shoes are collected by women’s centres to distribute to women in need.

If you are interested in holding a shoe memorial in your school or community next December, please visit these sites for more information: www.shoememorial.com or contact www.wecanbc.ca.

The BCTF workshop Youth Relationships in a Sexualized World is free to teachers and can be booked on your school or district Pro-D day.

This workshop reveals many of the sexualized influences from media and culture on youth relationships. Teachers are provided with options to raise our youth’s awareness around these negative influences in order to seek healthier, more respectful relationships.

To book a workshop, please contact the BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division, 1-800-663-9163, local 1857, or 604-871-1857.
Together we can

by Jenny Simpson, secondary school teacher in New Westminster

I’ve worked with at-risk youth as a teacher for over 10 years in BC and the Northwest Territories. In this time I have supported students in crisis dealing with emotional, circumstantial, violence, and addiction issues. I never imagined what it would be like to have one of my own family members experience these issues, let alone all at once.

I’ve never felt so helpless as I did when my niece first talked to me about her addiction.

I’ve read Missing Sarah and I’ve taken many psychology courses. I understand what addiction is and what it can do to a family. I have also seen this first hand and worked with many community agencies to support youth in addiction; I’ve been to some of my students’ cakes (1st or 2nd year sober celebrations), and I’ve seen relapse and recovery. I knew it was hard, nearly impossible, but I didn’t know how hard, or how impossible it seemed.

I kept a brave face when I was with Chelsea a lot of the time. I made jokes and tried to remain positive and upbeat in countless doctor’s or Ministry offices, or medical clinic waiting rooms. I made lists and brought snacks and hugged her as often as possible. I watched movies with her and watched her sleep. I called help lines and doctors and contacted workers I knew. I visited sober houses, called treatment placements, and I kept trying to do anything I could until we found something that worked. Her mother and grandmother did the same. Our family worked very hard to keep her safe.

When I left in July she was going into treatment again. She had to have 30 days clean before we could see her again. I left for Ontario and was to return at the end of August. We would begin again and hopefully she would be feeling strong.

On August 17 I was in a collision in Ontario. Everyone was okay, but an epic journey of awaiting my car to be repaired ensued. I didn’t make it home in time. Chelsea died on September 4.

The week before she died I spoke with her two or three times. I had also answered my phone in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and I remember watching a prairie sunset while we talked about her plan to get into another treatment house in Abbotsford. The last two times we spoke she had relapsed. I asked her to get somewhere safe and we could talk then. She did. She went to a harm reduction house. She had a room and she had support workers. She used one last time and she overdosed.

It’s been hard trying to piece things together with our family and the loose ends Chelsea’s life left behind. She experienced violence, misogyny, and exploitation in her last 3–4 years. When I thought of missing and vulnerable women I hoped she would not become one of them; now I have even more empathy for the families that experience this kind of loss.

Without support networks like We Can, who work to build awareness of the vulnerability of women in BC, people like my niece would not have a voice. I am thankful that they allowed her story to be told on December 6 at their annual shoe memorial. It was powerful to be a part of this event and to have Chelsea’s shoes displayed to demonstrate the hole that her absence has left.

While her journey on Earth is done, I believe she has taught me and my family a great deal. I hope we can move forward with more love and empathy in our hearts for others in similar situations.

Together we can.
When I first read George Orwell's 1984 somewhere back in the fifties, the ugly, repressive regime of Big Brother seemed an over-the-top nightmare, perhaps attributable to Orwell's bad experiences as a participant in the Spanish Civil War where he learned to be, shall we say, less than impressed with the politics of the Communist Party and the USSR. Yet, as the years progressed and we first approached the year 1984 and then passed it, Orwell’s nightmare vision of totalitarian control has become painfully realistic. Today, we need only think of the way our telephones and internet transactions are monitored by shadowy government agencies that seem entirely out of control.

In Margaret Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale we have another nightmare vision, Orwellian in its invasive monitoring of its citizens, but particularly repulsive in its outright institutionalized misogyny: women are not merely subservient, but reduced to baby-making machines and not much else. Again, the reader is likely to see Atwood’s miserable world as a fantastic but impossible nightmare.

And yet, here in British Columbia a rapidly growing religious cult, seemingly right out of The Handmaid’s Tale, has been operating for 40 or more years as one government after another has turned a blind eye to an institutionalized misogyny every bit as vicious and degrading as Atwood’s.

Now, at long last, proceedings have begun against Winston Blackmore and James Oler, of the Bountiful Commune, in a courtroom in Creston in the Kootenays. The Bountiful Commune is a Canadian branch of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS)—in other words, a fundamentalist Mormon sect.

That life in the FLDS communes is indeed comparable to the worst literary nightmares of Orwell and Atwood is evident to a reader of The Witness Wore Red, the memoir written by Rebecca Musser. Quite a number of memoirs have been written by FLDS escapees, but Musser’s book is one of the most recent, the best written, and gives the clearest picture of the inside workings of the FLDS elite. Musser was one of the many young brides of the head of the commune, Rulon Jeffs, and a direct witness to much of what went on behind the scenes, when the “saints” running the place dropped their pretensions.

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Finally, the most recent book on the subject is A Cruel Arithmetic: Inside the Case against Polygamy by Craig Jones. Jones is a lawyer whose job it was to present the government case before the BC Supreme Court that was asked to rule on whether or not the law against polygamy was constitutionally valid. In his remarkable book, Jones makes a strong case that polygamy by its very arithmetic will necessarily result in a host of negative consequences, such as the oppression of women and the
steady lowering of the age at which girls are forced into marriage. Jones’ evidence convinced the Supreme Court of the validity of the law against polygamy, and will also convince a fair-minded reader who is perhaps tempted to respond to polygamy by remembering Trudeau’s words about keeping the state out of the bedrooms of the nation.

I don’t know if there is a senior humanities course offered in the public school system that might allow students to explore the startling similarities between Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Musser’s memoir. If there isn’t, there should be.

Check out our website at [www.campaignagainstbountifulabuse.com](http://www.campaignagainstbountifulabuse.com).

**BCTF motions regarding Bountiful**

**SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*Lambert/McCaffery*
That the BCTF condemn the trafficking of young girls in Bountiful as wives, and the use of public funds to support the independent schools in Bountiful, and express our concerns to the premier and the ministers of education and children and families and the attorney general.

(Carried Executive Committee Minutes, September 24–25, 2004)

**BOUNTIFUL AND POLYGAMOUS COMMUNITIES**

*Sims/Lambert*
1. That the BCTF actively lobby Canadian authorities to enforce human trafficking legislation.
2. That the BCTF encourage law enforcement agencies to investigate persistent rumours of physical and emotional abuse of the members of Bountiful.
3. That the BCTF support the creation of an independent task force under the terms of reference outlined at the round table on Bountiful.

(Carried Executive Committee Minutes, September 20–21, 2007 Carried)

*Kilbride (Surrey)/Wiley-Shaw (Vancouver Elementary)*—Resolution 156—Bountiful
That the BC government withdraw funding for the religious schools in Bountiful.

(Representative Assembly Minutes, November 7–8, 2008 Carried)

**FULL-TIME TABLE OFFICERS’ REPORT**

*Lambert/Iker*
That the BCTF once again write to Education Minister Shirley Bond and to Attorney General Wally Opal expressing teacher concerns and requesting a meeting with both ministers to:
1. present our petitions
2. discuss our concerns
3. press for a withholding of public funding from both independent schools in Bountiful.

(Executive Committee Minutes, September 20–21, 2007 Carried)

The video below is available to borrow from BCTF Information Services:

*Leaving Bountiful*
follows Debbie Palmer, who left the polygamous community of Bountiful and subsequently loses all power, resources, and grace within the community. As her adversary tightens control, Debbie sets her house on fire, flees, and ultimately becomes a crusader against what she calls the “illegal cross-border trade in Canadian and American female children for sexual and breeding purposes.”

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Dear colleagues

I was living the dream, freedom 55, after teaching for 24 years, my time was now my own. I was painting like a mad woman, sewing up a storm, singing my heart out, and writing my memoir too. My life was filled with bliss, but unfortunately, ignorance is bliss. Now I am filled with embarrassment and shame, as I discovered that my pension money through BC Investment Management Corporation (bcIMC) is invested in environmental destruction.

bcIMC have invested in Island Timberlands that with Brookfield Timberlands’ direction, clear-cut old growth forest above Port Alberni’s water supply in July 2014. Some of those trees were a 1,000 years old—BC’s natural treasures.

The teachers’ pension is not the only plan implicated, so are the college, municipal, public service, and WorkSafe pension funds. We are pooled together in one big, ugly mess. The pool has to be cleaned.

Together we are tearing the heart out of BC. After all those years of teaching respectful stewardship of the land, trees, and water to find that this is happening? My dear students had Earth Day bake sales every year, and their parents were so generous. We would buy trees and our classroom would look like a forest. The excitement rippled through the whole school as the trees arrived. Little heads would peek in at all the greenery.

My students raised salmon for 10 years: watched the eggs hatch, named the little fry names like Bubbles and Raoul. Was this all in vain? The complacency I see about this investing makes me tire. Where is the outrage? Where is the accountability? We have had our share of ancient trees—we have already clear-cut 90% of the ancient forest. It is time to leave the giant trees to future generations.

Please say no more clear-cutting ancient trees. Let’s keep our natural treasures; greed does not always have to win. I believe that the BC government should pass a law protecting every tree over the age of 250 years on private and public land. New Zealand and Australia did, why not us? Why are we following Brazil’s lead? Is it corruption? Oversight? No regard for the future?

There are some things that we can do: Island Timberlands is clearing new roads to some very vulnerable old growth forest sites right now—that is why my letter sounds urgent. Please contact bcIMC, your pension plan administrators, and the BC government.

I beg you to help spread this information. Every teacher I have spoken to is disheartened by this investment. The clear-cut destruction of the ancient trees above a town’s water supply is beyond reason. I have heard bcIMC has had to re-evaluate other poor investments, why not this one? All members in the “pool” have to know where their money is being invested. Please help save the remaining 10% of ancient trees for the children.

A screaming retired teacher who still loves her students,

Kim Soo Goodtrack,
kimsoogoodtrack@gmail.com

The Alberni District Teachers’ Union brought the following motion to the Winter 2015 Representative Assembly and it was passed:

Island Timberlands
That the BCTF request that the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (bcIMC) strongly encourage Island Timberlands to:
1. implement Forest Practice procedures that will result in certification from the Forest Stewardship Council.
2. divest and sell their watershed holdings in the area known as McLaughlin Ridge, near Port Alberni, to an organization(s) that will conserve and preserve forest lands.
I have developed this science resource on climate change/destabilization, its impact globally and in Canada, environmental issues (particularly in BC), along with solutions for keeping greenhouse gases from escalating above the present 400 ppm of CO₂. The book supports curriculum concepts in social studies and the sciences, but my hope is that all students will have the opportunity to access a free copy. Questions of an interactive nature for students and teachers are included at the end of each chapter, followed by a list of references. Appropriate websites appear at the end of the book with a brief biography of the author.

The renowned biologist Edward Wilson bluntly asks, “Do we want to destroy the creation? That is what we are doing at an accelerating rate.” Mahatma Gandhi, ahead of his time, pleaded, “We must be the change we wish to see in the world.” Nelson Mandela in his wisdom proclaimed that, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world, we know what needs to be done—all that is missing is the will to do it.”

Climate Change: A Science Resource for Students

Great news for Social Justice 12 teachers

An entire 13-lesson unit on labour history and studies developed specifically for the Social Justice 12 course is now available on the BCTF’s resource sharing website TeachBC (teachbc.bctf.ca).

The unit was designed to be used as a stand-alone, or as individual lessons and activities that could be integrated with teachers’ existing units. Activities include role plays, readings, film guides, printable worksheets, and research ideas. The unit begins with key introductory lessons on the role of the labour movement in establishing fundamental social justice protections in the workplace and in society, and extends to special research topics in workers’ rights in British Columbia. Other lessons include activities on workers and the law, labour on film, and labour leaders.

The unit wraps up with activities on globalization and worker and labour songs, with extension opportunities connecting social justice with art and culture.

All lessons include suggestions for extended inquiry and each contains an essential question for students to consider. An overarching goal is for students to analyze the social forces that may divide or unite people, and how solidarity among social groups...
can work to achieve a just and equitable society.

Social justice is defined in the provincial curriculum as “the full participation and inclusion of all people in society, together with the promotion and protection of their legal, civil, and human rights. The aim of social justice—to achieve a just and equitable society where all share in the prosperity of that society—is pursued by individuals and groups through collaborative social action.” How does a study of the working people and the labour movement fit with this definition?

The labour movement has a long tradition of fighting for an equitable society through collaborative and social action. Recognizing this deep connection between fighting for an equitable society and the

labour movement, the Labour History Project has developed these teaching materials to support Social Justice 12 teachers in the classroom.

The unit was developed by a collective of practising and retired teachers, and a labour history researcher. The Labour History Project curriculum initiative is a partnership between the Labour Heritage Centre and the BC Teachers’ Federation, with additional support from the BC Federation of Labour and the SFU Labour Studies program. The initiative is intended to increase the access of BC’s K–12 students to labour history and other labour studies issues. For further information on the Labour History Project, contact info@labourheritagecentre.ca.

Grizzly bears need our help!

by Andree D’Andrea, retired secondary school teacher

The Coastal Guardian Watchmen Network got to know Cheeky very well. He was a fun loving, young grizzly who was a frequent fisher of the Kwatna River. The network was monitoring the grizzly population of the estuary and got to know and recognize members of the local bear population. Cheeky, as they nicknamed him, was equally aware of the humans. He could often be seen peeking out of the bushes and members of the network were convinced that Cheeky could be seen sticking his tongue out at them. Cheeky was living in a remote area and living life with all the joy and freedom that only beings unaware of the dangers of humans are able to do.

Hunting season opened. Clayton Stoner, a hockey player, was legally able to purchase a grizzly tag, charter a boat and invade Cheeky’s home. Cheeky stood no chance against the weaponry. He was slaughtered for sport. His body left to rot while his severed head was paraded around for photos with his “conqueror.” The beautiful animal who so enjoyed life was left an obscene, dismembered carcass.

This scenario is re-enacted in BC 249 more times each year. In 2012, 69 grizzlies were slaughtered by residents and 181 by non-residents. Wealthy hunters from other countries are able to purchase “tags” for a little over $1,000, plus $120 for taxes. About $1,100 dollars goes to our government. Guides charge in the range of $13,500. We are, therefore, allowing hunters to enter our country and butcher one of our most iconic species for about $15,000 a piece. Why do we allow this to happen?

If all is to be reduced to monetary considerations, we are participating in a self-defeating practice. A live grizzly is able to generate much greater revenue than a slaughtered grizzly. This is perhaps the most basic kind of recycling. Guides are able to attract eco-tourists to view these magnificent animals innumerable times, generating approximately $1.5 billion in annual revenue. Guides are able to guide hunters to slaughter a bear once, generating a mere $350 million annually.

The public is sometimes told that the grizzly is an aggressive carnivore that preys upon domestic livestock. We are told that farmers must have the right to defend their animals against such...
a threat to their livelihood. In fact, government statistics show only two verified attacks by grizzlies on domestic animals from April 2013 to March 2014. In Wyoming and Montana, where grizzlies are protected, the federal government reimburses ranches for any verified loss. These losses account for 1% of calf deaths and 0.1% of cattle mortality. Certainly, a program of this nature could protect ranchers from any financial burden.

Independent polls conducted over the past few decades have shown that the vast majority of British Columbians find this slaughter reprehensible (88%), while an even greater number of self-declared hunters disapprove (95%). BC Coastal First Nations have issued a ban on grizzly hunting in their traditional lands. Sadly, this ban cannot be legally enforced. If the majority of British Columbians feel so strongly about this barbaric practice, why is a prohibition not a forgone conclusion?

Biologists have also expressed concerns over the grizzly “harvest.” (It is interesting that the government documents refer to “sustainable harvest”—such a sterile term for such a bloody practice.) Government agencies issue reports assuring the public that they have scientific proof that this “harvest” is well within the limits of the grizzly population. This certainty, however, is not shared by several other reputable institutions. A recent joint study by Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria did not support a “sustainable harvest” conclusion. As a matter of fact, several scientific studies have called for a complete ban on the grizzly hunt based on data that suggests the grizzly population will soon be decimated. Despite this evidence to the contrary, the government of BC has recently not only reinstated the slaughter, but expanded it to now include areas in the Kootenays and the Cariboo. Why are the provincial and federal governments so unwilling to consider the possibility that independent scientists might just be correct in their assessment? If we wait until the grizzly population is extinct in some locations, it will be cold comfort to be able to say that the government should have listened. The federal government has listed grizzlies as “at risk.” When I questioned why grizzlies were not determined to be “endangered,” I received an email that stated government was awaiting the results of more studies. In the meantime, the slaughter continues despite a preponderance of evidence that supports a ban.

The World Wildlife Federation and the Suzuki Foundation are closely monitoring the grizzly slaughter as are many other world wildlife agencies. What does this say about us as Canadians when we are allowing a barbaric practice to continue as the world stage watches in dismay?

One can be left with a feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness in the face of such indifference to the plight of these magnificent animals. It seems that the 109 registered guides in BC have more rights than the 88% of the general population who abhor this practice. First Nations do not have the right to protect indigenous species. Scientific evidence can be ignored. These iconic animals, which have become synonymous with Canada, can be slaughtered at the whim of wealthy hunters who view butchery as a form of fun and pleasure. This simply cannot continue. Maybe we as a country need to turn to our young and ask them to donate their energy and enthusiasm to help us save their birthright. Maybe if the students of British Columbia are made aware of the grizzly’s peril, they would take up the challenge of educating their elders and make it necessary for our elected officials to enforce the will of the majority.

I am a grandmother of four and I passionately believe that we as adults are only stewards of the earth. We have a moral obligation to leave the planet as we found it. A world without grizzlies will be a much poorer place. I have written a unit for Grades 4–12 and posted them on the TeachBC site. They can be found at https://teachbcdb.bctf.ca/permalink/resource403.

Grizzly Conservation Lesson Plans

Compiled and written by
Andree D’Andrea

January 2015
- The rationale for creating these plans was to give teachers and their students an opportunity to examine the conditions surrounding grizzly bears in British Columbia.
- There are lessons appropriate for Grades 4–12. I have included each grades’ learning outcomes for each lesson.
- These lesson plans are divided into four parts. Included are suggestions for cognitive tools/strategies to use for each part of the lesson, with no intention that the instructor must adhere to these:
  - Connect the learner. Build and activate their prior knowledge.
  - Engage the learner to process the information.
  - Transform the learning. Guide the learner to generate a demonstration of their understanding and show what they know.
  - Reflect on their learning. Encourage metacognition and inspire students to notice their new ideas, their connections, and questions.
- Download from TeachBC at https://teachbcdb.bctf.ca/permalink/resource403.
2014–15 Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ)

- advises the BCTF on social justice issues
- reviews and promotes social justice workshops
- liaises with community groups and NGOs
- develops policy on emerging issues
- reviews and develops materials for classroom teachers
- develops and supports networks of social justice contacts in the following action group areas: Antiracism, Antipoverty, Status of Women, LGBTQ, Peace and Global Education, Environmental Justice
- co-ordinates the work of the six action groups.

Antiracism Action Group
Nassim Elbardouh
Sara McGarry
Natalie Mah
Natalie Wai

Workshops
- Bafa Bafa/Rafa Rafa
- Socializing Justice: Taking Action Against Racism
- Responding to Racism Through ART and Ally-Building.

LGBTQ Action Group
David Butler
Lizzy Midyette
Lam Ngo
Joe Winkler

Workshops
- Breaking the Silence: Understanding and Acting on LGBTQ Issues in Schools
- From Silence to Action: How to Be an Ally on LGBTQ issues
- Creating a Gender Inclusive School Culture
- Teaching Inclusive, Comprehensive Sexual Health Education in Your Classroom.

Status of Women Action Group
Carol Arnold
Corie McRae
Kristin Quigley
Viji Shanmugha

Workshops
- Assertive Communication Skills
- Thirsty for Change: The Global Water Crisis
- Stamping Out Cyberbullying With Self-Awareness, Self-Discipline, and Empathy
- Youth Relationships in a Sexualized World.

Peace and Global Education Action Group
Dan Hula
Shanee Prasad
Shannon Rerie
Deidre Torrence

Workshops
- Bringing Global Education into the Classroom
- Creating Cultures of Peace
- Strategies for Discussing Controversial Issues.

Antipoverty Action Group
Ryan Cho
Bernice McAleer
Annie Ohana
Sue Spalding

Workshops
- Poverty as a Classroom Issue
- Teachers Can Make a Difference for Children Living in Poverty.

Environmental Justice Action Group
Susan Ghattas
Julie Johnston
Jennifer Jury
Richard Pesik

Workshops
- Linking Thinking: Integrating Environmental Education into All Classrooms.

Important SJ dates to celebrate
March 21 International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination
April 8 International Day of Pink
April 22 Earth Day
May 10 World Fair Trade Day
International Day for the elimination of racial discrimination

Beyond the barriers: March 21

Choose Justice, Empowerment, Decolonization, Equity • Create Systemic change

http://bctf.ca/socialjustice.aspx?id=17632