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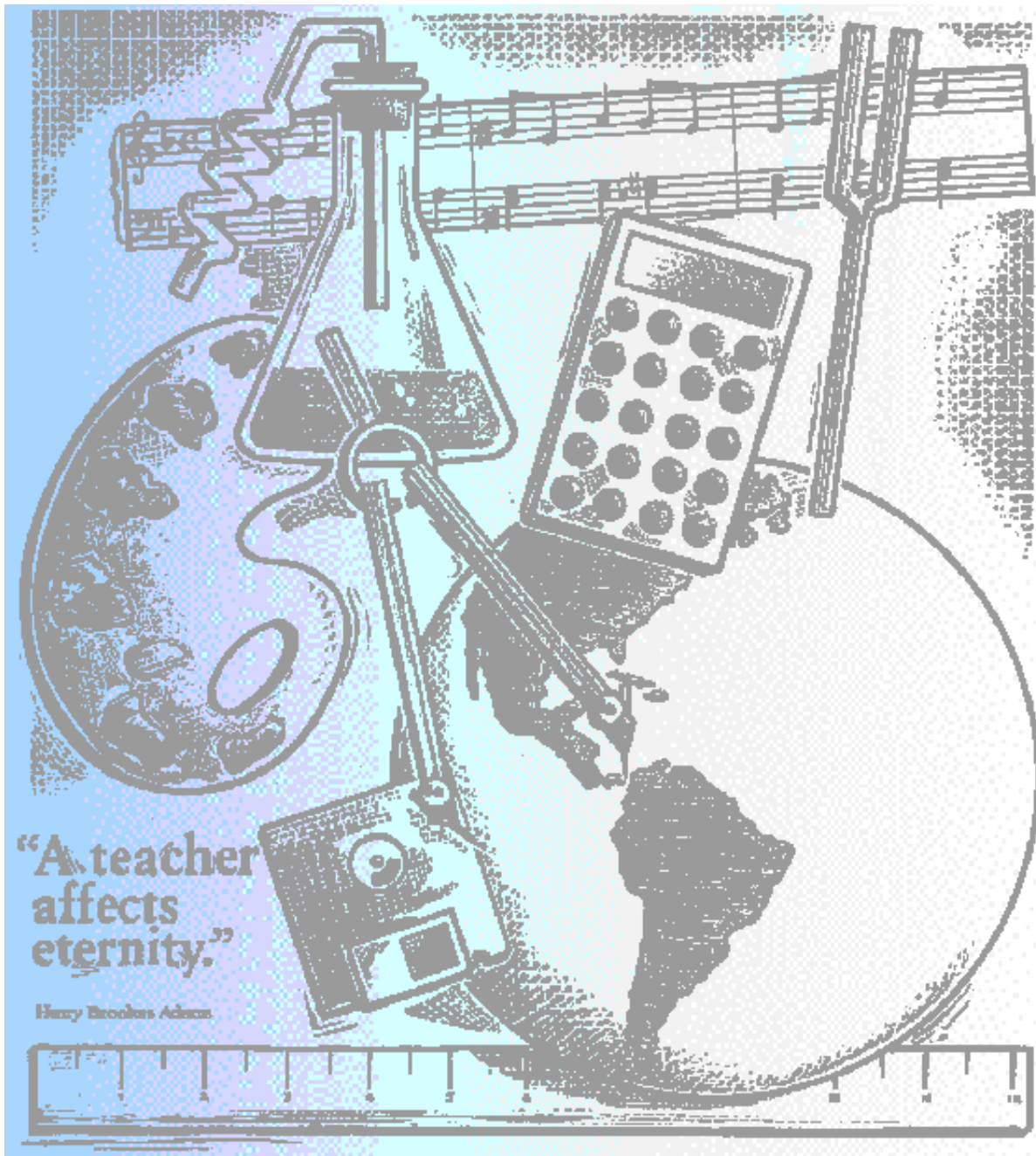
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*Newfoundland and Labrador Teacher's Association*

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*Vol. 41/ No. 4 January / February 1998*

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**"A teacher  
affects  
eternity."**

Henry Brooks Adams

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# INDECISION

by Lesley-Ann Browne

Writer's block has never been a problem for me. Often one hears of writers who have run out of ideas and cannot get a word on paper. Well presently I have the opposite problem. I have so many things to write about that time and space are the difficulty. I have many ideas and I have written three editorials already for this edition of The Bulletin. But each is lacking creativity and purpose and is unworthy, I think, of being called an editorial.

I have attempted to write about topics near and dear to my heart but I am not satisfied with the result. I have never considered myself a perfectionist but I refuse to put anything in print if it is not acceptable. So here I am again writing an editorial and not knowing what the result will be. I have no plan, no outline, but here goes anyway. I guess this is my smorgasbord of editorial indecision.

Christmas is finally over and if I had to rate the Christmas season on a scale from one to ten, it was a very low two. Don't get me wrong Santa came and did all his wonderful stuff. He brought everything that was on the list, but there was something missing from this Christmas that I cannot explain. Could it be the constant barrage of bad news that has come our way in recent months? The sickness, the loss of jobs and the misery of other people? I was told that my lack of enthusiasm was an age thing but I like to think I can muster up childlike enthusiasm when necessary. I'll do better next Christmas.

We received a new addition to our family over the Christmas Season. Our new arrival is a virtual reality pet, from the Nano family. It beeps and has to be fed, and makes a mess. It eats and drinks quite a bit and it goes to the doctor. When we don't play with it, it becomes sad and runs away from home. If we keep pressing the discipline button it puts on a backpack, says "bye bye", and leaves home.

My opinion of this "toy" before it showed up in my home was one of animosity. I felt they were clever but I didn't need or want one in my home. A real pet is demanding enough without some fake version demanding more of my attention. I had cursed the parents who had allowed their child to take it to school for other children to view.

While I was less than enthusiastic about the "pet" I, like many parents, made sure my child was not disappointed on Christmas morning. I had read and heard a lot about them and nothing positive was among the reviews. Our little Nano, however, has not taken over our lives. My daughter does not throw tantrums when it doesn't work properly and does not insist on bringing it everywhere she goes. She does not bring her other toys to school, so why would I allow her to bring a virtual reality pet. The major cause of the uproar with these things is due to parents allowing children to treat them like they are real and letting them be taken to school. If I were a teacher in the classroom and had to listen to 30 virtual reality pets beeping all day, along with 30 children, I would make a fuss as well. However, one little Nano in the broad scheme of things is not difficult to manage. Besides, we can always remove the batteries.

*Lesley-Ann Browne is Communications Officer with the NLTA*

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## DOING POORLY

Research concludes that while child poverty seems to be a predictor of anti-social and criminal behaviour among youth and adults, it is more accurate to say that poverty brings with it a host of risk factors:

Poverty contributes to the probability of low birth weight babies and overall poor health and nutrition;

Poverty is associated with reduced opportunities for children to form warm, secure attachments with caregivers;

Children born into poverty are at greater risk of being abused and may fail to master social skills;

The school performance, emotional adjustment and skill development of poor children have been found to be significantly weaker than that of middle-class children.

(Source: National Crime Prevention Council, Risks or Threats for Children, Nov. 1995)

## IS THERE A SOLUTION?

After a stray bullet critically wounded a Los Angeles teacher, a fund-raising campaign generated \$66,000 to buy bullet-proof glass to replace the school's windows.

(Source: NEA Today, May 1996, V14, N9)

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# MASTERS PROGRAM AND GRADUATE COURSES

*Summer Schools -- St. John's and Corner Brook*

Northern College of Education is an institution within the Scottish University Sector offering either a full M.Ed. Program or individual graduate courses by Supported Distance Learning. It is proposed to offer summer schools in School Administration and IT and Learning in Newfoundland in July 1998. These single week summer schools will be taught by faculty from Scotland and provide coverage of the central content of each course allowing reading, reflection and assignments to be completed subsequently to fit with each teacher's professional commitments.

Suggested courses for summer school are Emerging Learning Technologies for the Classroom from IT and Learning, and Managing Change from School Administration. Availability of these courses is dependent on enrolments. For initial details and application forms contact e-mail address below. It is intended that final confirmation of these summer schools will be made in late March or early April.

Each individual course costs C\$850 including summer school/teaching materials, extensive tutor support by e-mail, fax or telephone and access to Northern College library support.

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## RIGOLET

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### **Exploring heritage through art**

Students at Northern Lights Academy in Rigolet, Labrador had an opportunity to explore a unique part of their heritage this past November when they participated in a week long soapstone carving project. William Lucy, an Inuit soapstone carver from Hopedale, was invited to teach a soapstone carving module to all students at the school as well as to interested adults from the community. Patricia Hayward, Principal at Northern Lights Academy, says the primary students used bars of soap and butter knives while older students used soapstone and the proper carving tools to finish their project. She says the high school students were so captivated by the project that they worked after school, evenings and on the weekend to produce art pieces such as a loon, husky dog, whale, goose and more. "It was fulfilling," she says "for parents to see their children integrating their cultural background into a beautiful art form." Commenting on the abundance of talent that exists at the school, William Lucy has encouraged the staff to make this type of project available on a yearly basis.

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## LETHBRIDGE

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### **Students participate in Cabot 500 celebrations**

The large crowd in attendance at the dockside of The Matthew in Bonavista on June 25 was treated to a fine musical performance by the students of L.R. Ash Elementary in Lethbridge. The musical pageant entitled, "Here's to 500 More!" was the culmination of several months work by teachers Lisa Drover and Lori Murphy, and their students.

The school's vocal ensemble, made up of 36 girls, 8 to 12 years of age, was asked to perform at the pageant after submitting a written proposal and an audition tape in the fall of 1996. Ms. Murphy says their school was the only group of children to perform at Bonavista during the three days of celebrations. Soloists from L.R. Ash included: Daniel Prince, Kindergarten; Mark Dooley, Grade 1; Eric Moss, Grade 4; Maggie Dooley, Grade 6; and Erin Murphy, Grade 6. The pageant was narrated by Erin Murphy with Tyler Butt as The Matthew's 1497 cabin boy and Tyler Russell, his 1997 counterpart. The students were joined on stage by recording artist and former resident of Princeton, John Prince and his band, A Piece of the Rock, to sing their song, "Let's All Pull Together".

Ms. Murphy says the students were rewarded for their outstanding performance with a standing ovation from the attentive and appreciative audience. "Despite adding an extra week's work to our school year, this event provided great school spirit and was a real morale booster for the staff," she continued. "It was well worth the sleepless nights," added Ms. Drover.

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## MOUNT PEARL

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### **Rave reviews for Broadway musical**

This past November, O'Donel High School in Mount Pearl presented the Broadway musical "Grease" at the St. John's Arts and Culture Centre. Dean Williams, English Department Head at O'Donel and the show's producer, says the production was a complete success and the excellent reviews overwhelmed the students, teachers, and parents who had worked so hard on the show. In fact, he says, each of the five performances were sold out weeks before opening night and the demand for tickets and extra shows was tremendous.

Planning for the production began in January 1997. Theatre Arts teacher and Director, Leo Converse,

worked with students throughout the summer, and by September there were more than 100 students involved in the cast, chorus and crews. Grant Etchegary was the musical director and Janine Burke of The Dance Centre was the choreographer. Mr. Williams says the students and parents worked extremely hard and made many sacrifices for this project. "Their talents and abilities combined to create great entertainment," he says. "It was also the tireless efforts of so many of the teachers at O'Donel that brought success to Grease. Every teacher on staff contributed in one way or another to the production." Mr. Williams would like to recognize the many teachers who gave up their free time throughout the fall for the show's development Freeman Mercer, Joanne Lockyer, Larry O'Brien, Suzanne Goodland, Frank Hollohan, Carol Wadden, Clar Button, Mary Sullivan, Brian Fitzgerald, Lynn Woods, Cathy Penney, and all the staff for their help and patience.

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## ST. JOHN'S

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### **NLTA appointment**

The Provincial Executive Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is pleased to announce the appointment of René Wicks to the term position of Administrative Officer, Professional Development.

Throughout a teaching career that has spanned 24 years, René has worked in a number of capacities at the classroom, administrative, district, and post-secondary levels. Since 1996, he has been Principal of Paradise Elementary School, and was Program Coordinator for Social Studies, Technology and Learning Resources, and Religious Education at the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board from 1989 until 1996. He was Vice Principal/Learning Resource Teacher and Acting Principal (one year) at Upper Gullies Elementary School from 1987 to 1989 and Vice Principal/Resource Librarian (1985-87) and Vice Principal/Learning Resource Teacher (1982-84) at St. George's Elementary School in Long Pond. In 1984, René was seconded to a one-year position as Assistant Professor of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland to develop and teach courses on resource-based learning, media production and teaching strategies. Previous to that, he was Learning Resource/Social Studies Teacher (1975-82) and Special Education Teacher (1973-75) at Fred Kirby Junior High School in Foxtrap.

Over the past 17 years, René has prepared and presented approximately 65 in-service sessions at school, district, provincial, and national conferences. These sessions have centered on program development, the use of specific instructional strategies, staff development, student achievement, and computers in education. In addition, he has developed policies for the incorporation of technology in instruction, developed web sites for schools and district, and attained authorized training status for STEM~Net and WinSchool.

René has served on the provincial and regional executives of several NLTA special interest councils including: Social Studies, Program Coordinator's, Religious Education, Learning Resources, and School Administrator's. He has also been a member of the Canadian Association of Principals, Association for Teacher Librarianship in Canada, and the National Staff Development Council.

During the last 14 years, René has taught graduate and undergraduate courses at Memorial University of Newfoundland and has been contracted by MUN to develop and write instructional materials on teaching strategies for their distance education courses. He has authored and co-authored many publications and has developed several instructional media productions. He is the author of Learning to Learn Implementation Handbook, an in-service resource for districts, published by the Department of Education.

René received a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education in 1973, and a Master of Education (Learning Resources) in 1981.

In his new position, René will share responsibility for the development and implementation of the

Association's Professional Development program for Newfoundland and Labrador. He will work closely with Special Interest Councils, be responsible for the training of Branch Professional Development Officers, and work with councils and branches, boards and schools to maximize professional development opportunities for teachers throughout the province. This will include the assessment of teacher needs and the design and delivery of workshop sessions to meet these needs. In addition, René will represent the Association on professional development matters at provincial, regional and national levels.

### **Newfoundland educator elected to the NCTM Board of Directors**

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) has announced the election of Rita Janes to its Board of Directors. Ms. Janes is the first Canadian elected in an at-large position to the Board of Directors of the 120,000 organization of mathematics educators.

Ms. Janes, a resident of St. John's, is presently a Professional Development Consultant for teachers at all grade levels. She is well known throughout the province for her work as Mathematics Coordinator with the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board, providing many institutes and other professional development opportunities for teachers at her Board and also throughout the province. Ms. Janes is also well known as a speaker at conferences throughout Canada and the United States. She will give the opening keynote address at the Ontario Association of Mathematics Educators Conference in May, and will give extended workshops in Denver, Nashville and Washington during February and March. She has given the opening keynote for the past three years at the Atlantic Institute of Mathematics held in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

Ms. Janes worked as a classroom teacher for many years in the St. John's area, as well as an instructor in the Mathematics Department and the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. For the past 12 years she has served as Provincial Coordinator of the Senior High Mathematics League, a problem-solving contest for students who are mathematically talented and enjoy doing mathematics. She has held several executive positions on the Mathematics Special Interest Council of the NLTA, and was the first recipient of the NLTA Barnes Award for outstanding service in the area of professional development. In the Fall of 1997 she received a similar award from the Nova Scotia Mathematics Teachers Association.

As a teacher consultant, Ms. Janes developed and implemented the first program in gifted education in Newfoundland and Labrador and continues to work so that all students will have successful experiences in learning mathematics. She is particularly interested in developing programs that relate mathematics to real life situations, along with promoting the problem solving and higher level reasoning abilities of students while at the same time ensuring that students have the necessary basic skills in mathematics. Ms. Janes is well known for her work in developing and implementing a program for parents of elementary children to assist them in helping their children learn mathematics.

On the national level, Ms. Janes is a certified instructor in the Canadian Teachers Teaching with Technology program and provides institutes for classroom teachers across Canada and the United States in appropriate use of calculators at all grade levels. She has served on the Regional Services Committee, a major committee of NCTM, and chaired the Committee from 1994-95. She is also the Canadian Director of the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is a non-profit professional association of mathematics educators dedicated to the improvement of the teaching and learning of mathematics. It is a recognized leader in efforts to ensure an excellent mathematics education for all students and an opportunity for every mathematics teacher to grow professionally. NCTM offers vision, leadership and avenues of communication for mathematics educators from early childhood to university levels of teaching.

### **Sounds of the season**

Sounds of the season could be heard at the Arts and Culture Centre in St. John's this past December, as the



Eastern Division of the NLTA Music Council hosted its 22nd annual Christmas Suite. Thirty school music groups, which included choirs, bands and orchestras, participated during the three evening extravaganza, bringing the total number of students involved to approximately 1,900. Mary Dinn, President of the NLTA Music Council, says these students and their directors were provided with the opportunity to perform publicly outside their school concert, and also to perform for and hear other school groups. "With the high quality and variety of performances by each ensemble, no one was disappointed. Least of all those audience members who were lucky enough to obtain tickets," says Ms. Dinn. The performance was sold out for each of the three evenings. "This Christmas tradition, initiated 22 years ago, has enjoyed another successful year. Bravo to all this year's participants on a job well done. Hope to see you there again next year," concluded Ms. Dinn.

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## NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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### **Congratulations to ingenious students**

Approximately 800 Grade 6 and 7 students across the province accepted the Newfoundland Science Centre's (NSC) challenge to create a machine based on the principal "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction" in the Centre's second annual Ingenious Inventions Challenge held during National Science and Technology Week this past October. Rhonda Normore, Program Manager at the Newfoundland Science Centre, says with yet another group of amazing and imaginative inventions, the judges of the contest spent hours deliberating over the entries and their scores. Grade 6 winners include: 1st Place Adam McDonald and Jason Grant, St. Paul's Elementary, St. John's; 2nd Place Megan Condon, Daniele Collins, Allison O'Donnell, and Allison Oliver, Ecole Saint Patrick, St. John's; 3rd Place (tie) Joshua Russell, Chris Snow, and Timmy Bowring, Amalgamated Academy, Bay Roberts, and Laura Nugent, Ashley Harding, Matthew Spurrell, Jared Barfitt, and Bradley Budgell, Cowan Heights Elementary, St. John's; Honourable Mention - Adrienne Oliver and Shirley Avery, St. Stephen's Elementary, Stephenville. Grade 7 winners:: 1st Place - Ryan Webb, Peter Fifield, John-Paul Murphy, Timothy Gibbons and Patrick Mannion, Ecole Saint Patrick, St. John's; 2nd Place Marieke Gow and Alexandra Grant, Lakecrest Independent School, St. John's.

The Grade 6 students were faced with the challenge of creating a device to alert them to any intruders trying to sneak in on secret clubhouse meetings with their friends, especially their little brothers and sisters. Grade 7 students were limited only by their imaginations as they chose any everyday task (such as feeding a pet or brushing their teeth) and created a machine to do the job for them. With duct tape, wire, string, paper towel tubes, wood scraps, old toys, tin foil and just about anything else they could find at home, students from Chapel Arm, Bay Robert's, St. John's, Stephenville, Dunville and Marystown constructed their Ingenious Inventions according to their own blueprints. Teachers selected the best classroom entry to send to the NSC for judging. Ms. Normore says many of these inventions were great engineering feats, containing a number of pulleys, levers and wedges. Especially creative inventions, she says, included water power, elastic power along with electric circuits, elements of Conservation of Energy, catapults and more.

Prizes for the contest were provided by Operation Online, Staples-The Business Depot, Carnaby Row, Granny Bates Children's Books and Industry Canada, as well as support provided by Newfoundland Power and the Department of Education. Prizes included t-shirts, software, books and Lego Dacta kits.

### **Newfoundland Science Centre Cardboard Boat Race**

Grade 10, 11 and 12 students in Newfoundland and Labrador are again invited to participant in the Newfoundland Science Centre's Cardboard Boat Race held during National Engineering Week and Education Week in March. Rhonda Normore, Program Manager at the Newfoundland Science Centre, says the objectives of the contest match many of the objectives of Design Technology and the contest is a great skill-building, not to mention exciting, challenge for high school students. For registration and further information contact the Newfoundland Science Centre, Tel: 709-754-0823.

## **STEM~Net and AT&T announce increased online time for rural schools**

STEM~Net and AT&T Canada, Newfoundland recently announced that schools using the STEM~Net 1-800 SLIP service for student access will have their free online time quota increased from 10 to 20 hours per month, starting in February 1998. This additional online time for students in rural communities is made financially possible through the rebate provided to STEM~Net by AT&T Canada, Newfoundland on its long distance services. The STEM~Net 1-800 SLIP service provides student access for schools in rural Newfoundland and Labrador where local dial Internet access is not available. This service has been providing 10 hours per month free to schools for use by students in curriculum-related activities. Additional time had been made available to schools running SchoolNet GrassRoots projects, cost-shared by STEM~Net and Industry Canada's SchoolNet. Schools are also able to purchase additional hours of access at their own expense.

## **Diploma program in Technology Education**

The Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland is now accepting applications for the Diploma in Technology Education to be offered in the 1998 summer session in St. John's. The courses address the development of skills and competencies in the technological curriculum areas of communications and information, design and problem solving, control, production, power and energy, and integrated technology. Many course components utilize computer-based systems, competence with which is developed starting in the first summer. Nine of the ten required Diploma courses are offered over three summer sessions.

If you are interested in applying for this program, contact the Office of Undergraduate Student Services within the Faculty of Education at 709-737-3405 for the appropriate information. Space in the program is limited. Additional information is also available at [http://www.mun.ca/edu/fac\\_web/dip\\_tech.html](http://www.mun.ca/edu/fac_web/dip_tech.html), or by contacting Dr. Dennis Sharpe, Program Coordinator, Tel: 709-737-7549.

## **Nominations sought for Distinguished Principals/Vice-Principals Award**

Each year the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) and McDonald's Restaurants of Canada recognize one administrator for his or her contribution in the field of school and community leadership. The recipient receives a monetary award and an all expenses paid trip to the CAP Conference.

As part of the selection process, the School Administrators' Council (SAC) of the NLTA invites applications from candidates in Newfoundland and Labrador. The winner from the province will be awarded a plaque and a \$500 award donated by Darroch Mercer of World's Finest Chocolate, provincial co-sponsors. SAC will pay the winner's expenses to the SAC AGM in Corner Brook in April where the recipient will be appropriately recognized. The name of the individual will also be submitted to CAP as SAC's nomination for the Distinguished Principals/Vice-Principals Award. The national CAP Award has been won by an administrator from this province for the last two years. Hayward Blake, Principal of Ascension Collegiate in Bay Roberts was presented with the award last year. Previous to that, the award was won by Richard Parsons, Assistant Director, Personnel, with District 3 (Corner Brook/Deer Lake/St. Barbe South) School Board. Mr. Parsons was principal of Elwood Regional High when he received the award.

Nomination forms are available in the CAP Journal, Fall 1997, Volume 7, Number 2. Nomination forms should be submitted by February 15, 1998 to Kevin Foley, President, School Administrators Council, Tel: 709-256-8404; Fax: 709-256-8793. SAC's selection will be submitted to the CAP office by February 28, 1998. Further information on the awards or the nomination process can be obtained by contacting Kevin Foley.

## **Conference reaffirms value of music education**

Music educators from all over congregated in Halifax in late October for a music conference sponsored by the Kodaly Society of Canada, Kodaly Society of Nova Scotia, Canadian Music Educators Association (CMEA), and Nova Scotia's Music Educators Association (NSMEA). Among the distinguished roster of clinicians were Newfoundland and Labrador's Dr. Andrea Rose, who participated in an open round table discussion on "Music Education in the 20th Century" and Leslie Cross, who offered a session on "Musicianship and Music Literacy in the High School Choral Class. Mary Dinn, President of the NLTA Music Council, says there was such a line-up of presenters, it was difficult to select which sessions to attend.

The conference opened with a keynote address by Dr. Jean Sinor, Associate Dean and Director of Undergraduate Studies at Indiana University School of Music. Dr. Sinor's address was entitled "The Next Hundred-Year Plan: Preparing to Take the Kodaly Concept into the 21st Century". Peter Guildford from the Cultural Affairs Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Education then spoke on their goal and commitment of increasing opportunities for artists to interact with teachers and students in the communities. Other sessions included "Pedagogy for the Upper Elementary Music Classroom" by Dr. Sinor and "Music: The Natural Connector" which was offered by Rodger Beatty, Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Brock University in St. Catherine's, Ontario. Mr. Beatty presented practical strategies of linking and integrating music across the curriculum. Sincere Yip, founder/director of the Los Angeles Yip's Children Choral and Performing Arts Centre and conductor of Center's Children Choir also demonstrated the computer-based programs and materials as developed by Dr. Yip Wai Hong, for teaching music to children. Dr. Amanda Montgomery, professor at the Department of Elementary Education Faculty at the University of Alberta, addressed the topic of "Tuneful Beginnings: Strategies for Success", the focus being that learning to sing in tune is the most important musical skill to nurture in elementary school aged children.

Following the CMEA AGM and banquet, the first full day of the conference came to a close with an evening gala concert. Ms. Dinn says it was truly an Atlantic showcase, featuring the musical talent of several groups from the Atlantic region. "At the risk of sounding biased, I could feel nothing but pride for the stellar performance by Bishop's College Choir, under the direction of Leslie Cross. The high calibre of their performance was unsurpassed and one can rest assured that they not only represented Newfoundland and Labrador well, but also the music programs within the schools of our province. Congratulations to the choir and their director on a job well done!"

On the last day of the conference, Dr. Montgomery presented a session entitled "Music and Movement", providing participants an opportunity to explore songs, rhymes and finger plays. An Orff workshop was also offered by Alison Kenny-Gardhouse, President of Music for Children, Carl Orff Canada, Orff specialist at the Royal Conservatory of Music, and middle school teacher with the Scarborough Board of Education. During her session, musical activities for the junior classroom were explored through movement, song, drama and the use of instruments. Following the session, Dr. Ruth Prescesky, Assistant Professor of Music Education at Acadia University, conductor of the Acadia Youth Choir and co-editor of the NSMEA Journal and Newsletter, surveyed participants to find out if they would be interested in attending a two-week Orff workshop during the summer of 1998 at Acadia University. Ms. Dinn says if numbers warrant and the university accepts Dr. Prescesky's proposal, there is a possibility this workshop will proceed.

"What a whirlwind and intensive conference," says Ms. Dinn. "It was filled with so many wonderful and inspiring ideas. It simply reaffirmed the immense value of music education and the importance of having qualified music specialists implement the programs in order for our children to receive the best possible musical education."

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### **A&E to honour teacher innovation**

In January, A&E Television Networks launched the 1998 A&E Canadian Teacher Grant to recognize teachers in Canada who apply innovation in the classroom. To participate, teachers create a unique classroom project using A&E programming. Each entry will be judged by an independent panel of educators, education advocates and television professionals on the basis of four key criteria: teaching objective; integration of A&E program into curriculum; innovative approach; and benefit to students. The grand prize, a \$2,000 grant, will be awarded to the winning teacher. Additional grants of \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500 will be presented to first, second and third place winners. In addition, a colour TV, VCR and an A&E Video Library will be donated to the school of each prize winner. Grant winners will receive an all expenses-paid trip to Ottawa for an awards ceremony to be held in May. To obtain a registration form contact: A&E Canadian Teacher Grant, P.O. Box 337, Station F, Toronto, ON, M4Y 2L7, Tel: 1-800-722-6146. Deadline for submissions is April 1, 1998.

### **Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History**

Canada's National History Society (CNHS) is looking for outstanding teachers of Canadian history for the 1998 Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. The awards are open to Canadian teachers of social studies or history in Grades 1 to 12 (OAC in Ontario). The award celebrates and rewards the efforts of outstanding educators who contribute to making Canadian history accessible to all students and it encourages and promotes the sharing of great history teaching ideas. The CNHS invites nominees to submit a brief description of their submission or area of specialization for posting on its Web site at <http://www.cyberspc.mb.ca/~otmw/cnhs/cnhs.html>. Selected finalist lesson plans are posted and published in a newsletter. Students, parents, teachers and administrators can source information as specific as the history of Gaspé fishing or as precious as student-documented native tales. Nomination forms were mailed to schools and school boards across Canada in January 1998. For further information, call 1-800-861-1008.

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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
**TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**

ON LOCATION REPORT  
for The Bulletin

To have your story told in On Location News... please complete this report and submit to:

Lesley-Ann Browne, Editor, [The Bulletin](#),  
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association,  
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1

Name

Position

School

School  
Address

Postal Code

Telephone

E-mail

Event Date(s)

Type of Event

Event  
Description

Colorful Quote(s) from Participant(s)

Most Significant Result of the Event

Send

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Reset

Strengthening our Association

## PREPARING FOR BATTLE

*by Brendan Doyle*

The new school year unfolded with major internal challenges for the NLTA. The Association had to adjust to a new President as well as many individuals assuming new administrative positions. Thankfully, these individuals have settled nicely into their new positions and are poised to tackle the many problems facing teachers. I am absolutely confident that we have the staff that will make a difference to the personal and professional lives of teachers in 1998. The perseverance of teachers and the Association will be tested in an unprecedented fashion and, to cope, I suggest we accept Walter Elliot's claim that "perseverance is not a long race, it is very short races, one after another".

The constant stream of unsubstantiated criticisms of the education system that have contributed to the alarming low levels of teacher morale need to be challenged. In spite of the harsh economic and social realities existing in this province, the schools are more effective today than ever before, thanks, in large measure, to a dedicated, adaptable, and highly skilled teaching force. Higher retention rates and achievement levels by students, as well as increasing numbers of students doing advanced courses and succeeding at post-secondary institutions, represent but a few of the indicators of an improving school system. The NLTA must speak out about what teachers do and how well they do it, and I hope our efforts to do so will be evident to you in the near future.

Any improvements in schooling cannot be credited to the so-called educational reform efforts that we have heard so much about. The NLTA's call for reform was not a condemnation for the past but rather a call for even more optimum learning opportunities. The response by government has been reform initiatives that can only be characterized as superficial and limited to tinkering with the structure. To date, restructuring the system has meant reducing the number of school boards and board-based personnel, then downloading responsibilities to administrators downloading that has the effect of turning administrators into business managers. To this, add school councils and school consolidations and you have the sum total of educational reform. What about our classrooms? Our teachers?

School improvement initiatives are very trendy these days but, unfortunately, teacher development that is so recognizable by proponents of school improvement as being critical and central to successful initiatives is blatantly overlooked. School improvement must be about helping schools become learning and inquiring communities for teachers as well as students. Further-more, research suggests that the status of teachers in a school culture escalates with real school improvement. If the status of teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador is measured by rates of pay and assigned administria, then God help us!

Real opportunities to enhance the status of teachers occur during periods of collective bargaining. The end product of collective bargaining, a collective agreement, is not exclusively the domain of teacher welfare as is often suggested. To the contrary, a collective agreement is as much about professional issues as it is about welfare issues. In essence, it is a vehicle for enhancing professional priorities by establishing the working and learning conditions necessary for teachers to exercise professional judgement about what is best for students.

Economic and social forces over which we have little control have thwarted efforts to secure a new collective agreement for the past two years. Hence, the higher salaries, secure pension plan, and improved working and learning conditions that are so critical to improving teacher morale, have been beyond our grasp. This sad reality must end early in 1998 and, to that end, your Provincial Executive will spare no efforts. You will be advised of specific efforts undertaken by the Association to secure a new collective agreement in the near future. Meanwhile, every single teacher must accept responsibility for advancing the

cause of the profession in the political realm.

I understand that many teachers are disinterested in, and disillusioned with, the political system. Add to this the daily demands placed on their personal and professional lives and one can readily justify leaving the political lobbying to others. Yet, if those people who have committed their lives to education and understand its needs best do not fight for education in the political arena, then no one else will. We must believe that education can be improved through political action and, individually and collectively, be prepared to do our part at this crucial juncture in negotiations.

The divisive and frustrating nature of the issues facing NLTA have left many wondering if the strength of solidarity is left to fight. My frequent visits to schools and meetings with teachers in the past few months have given me increased hope that solidarity, while weakened, will rebound to previously strong levels when the battle cry is sounded. And it will be sounded!

The year 1998 calls for perseverance and solidarity as we tackle the many problems that beset the profession. Your support and understanding in the first quarter of my mandate has been very much appreciated and makes me feel more optimistic that we can, and will, begin a new and more positive chapter in the teaching profession. Finally, I do appreciate invitations that provide me with an opportunity to interact directly with teachers and, now that our full complement of staff is in place, I am more readily available for visitations. I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best in 1998!

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*Brendan Doyle is President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association*



Equity In Education

# A CONCERN FOR ALL

*by Karen Warr*

In the education system, we are constantly striving towards the achievement of quality programming for our students. As Achilles, Finn, and Bain (1998) state, "In seeking quality, educators continuously change, evaluate, and refine the educative process." As well as being concerned with the quality of education, educators need to be acutely aware of the importance of achieving equity. At times, individuals have mistakenly used the terms equality and equity synonymously. The two terms, however, have very unique and distinct meanings.

Equality implies a likeness or sameness in terms of measure, quality, or amount. Equity, however, addresses the fair and just treatment of individuals, ensuring bias and favoritism do not exist. The equal treatment of individuals, however, does not automatically result in equitable outcomes for these individuals. The equal treatment of individuals or groups who are unequal at the outset will not result in equitable outcomes. Achieving equitable outcomes necessitates some groups and individuals receiving more resources and supports than others. Only then can outcomes be deemed equitable.

Equity, then, according to the above definition, is a very broad term, affecting all aspects of education, including professional issues and teacher welfare issues. The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, through the work and efforts of teachers in the field, volunteers in leadership positions, and the NLTA professional and support staff, pursues a variety of avenues to ensure equity in education. NLTA is a major stakeholder in education and offers assistance and advice to many individuals and groups at different levels in the education system. The Association is a strong advocate and lobbyist, protecting its members against injustices and ensuring government and school board policies follow equitable practices.

Through collective bargaining, NLTA strives to ensure all members obtain equitable benefits and working conditions. The elimination of inequities does not occur instantaneously, and at times, is a slow, gradual process. For example, earlier collective agreements did not have provisions for maternity leave for female teachers. With the subsequent negotiation of new contracts, female teachers earned maternity leave benefits. Through the collective bargaining process, the Association is continuing in its efforts to secure improved maternity leave benefits for teachers.

Another avenue used by the Association to address inequities is through the work of its Equity Issues in Education Committee. This Committee is composed of teacher volunteers from the field. The Committee falls under the jurisdiction of the Professional Development Division of NLTA and its broad mandate is to review policies, programs, and practices of the Association, ensuring that the principles of equity are applied within the Association and within the broader context of the Newfoundland and Labrador education system. All issues of discrimination and injustice, whether they are based on gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, geographic location, linguistic preference, or employment status fall under the umbrella of this Committee.

The attainment of equity is all-encompassing, touching all aspects of education. The attainment of equity through the application of equitable policies and practices can only result in better teaching and learning conditions for both the educators and the students of our province.








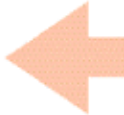
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*Karen Warr is an Enrichment Teacher at the Alexander Street School in St. John's and Chair of the Equity Issues in Education Committee.*



# CONTACT '98

August 16-19, 1998  
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College  
Corner Brook, Newfoundland

	Keynote:	What is School? Mr. Wayne Russell	
	Plenary session:	The Teacher as Reflective Practitioner	
	Concurrent sessions:	Assessment Practices Classroom Management Mentoring/Peer Support M.A.G.I.C. Multiple Intelligences Technology	
	Banquet Speaker:	To Be Announced	
	Final Reflection:	Dr. Clar Doyle	

**CONTACT** is a Conference on New Techniques and Classroom Teaching. It is jointly sponsored by the teacher organizations of the Atlantic Provinces: The Newfoundland Teachers' Association, the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and the New Brunswick Teachers' Association. CONTACT brings together approximately 120 teachers from the Atlantic region to learn from each other, to share ideas and to remain current.

The NLTA is the host province for CONTACT '98. A local committee in Corner Brook is already busy making plans.

The Professional Issues in Teaching Committee has reviewed CONTACT participation guidelines. Branches received a tentative agenda and application forms at the Joint Council Meeting in February.

For further information on CONTACT '98 please contact Elizabeth O'Neill (Ext. 246) or Beverly Park (Ext. 244) at the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, Tel: 709-726-3223 or toll-free 1-800 563-3599.

## CONTACT GUIDELINES

1. Initial submission of names of delegates to CONTACT shall be the responsibility of the NLTA Branch. In addition to applications

submitted by teachers to the Branch, nominations may be made at a Branch Meeting.

2. a) Applications/nominations from Branches shall be completed on or before May 01 and submitted to the NLTA for final approval as per guidelines in number 5.

b) Final approval of nominees for CONTACT shall occur at the Professional Issues in Teaching Committee's May meeting.

3. Where Branches do not submit nominations on time, the Branch may forfeit any right to have a representative at CONTACT. Decision of the Professional Issues in Teaching Committee shall be final.

4. A Branch is permitted to send up to three (3) nominees which shall be prioritized according to preference of delegate(s) to attend. Branches are asked to consider the following when prioritizing their nominees:

- a) Branch nominees who have not already attended a CONTACT Conference.
- b) Nominees that have been prioritized in previous years but have not attended.
- c) Nominees for which the Conference will have most relevance.

5. The Professional Issues in Teaching Committee shall act as the Selection Committee for representatives to CONTACT and shall be governed by the following guidelines:

- a) Teachers as prioritized by the Branches shall be the teachers selected for CONTACT.
- b) Branches which have not had a member attend a CONTACT Conference shall be given first priority.
- c) Priority for Branches which already have had representation at CONTACT shall be based on the time elapsed since previous attendance.

6. Teachers shall be notified of acceptance as soon as possible following the selection of representatives by the Professional Issues in Teaching Committee but not later than May 31st.

7. a) Representatives, where possible, shall be informed of the expenses of CONTACT, how much NLTA will provide and how much will be the individual teacher's responsibility.

b) Transportation costs shall be based on the cheapest mode of transportation possible. If CONTACT takes place outside of the province the cheapest mode shall be seat sale airfare.

c) Selected delegates to CONTACT will be requested to submit a non-refundable \$25.00 deposit towards their registration. This will be submitted to the NLTA CONTACT Registrar within two weeks of notification of selection.

## Application Form

Teachers must forward applications to the Branch for submission to CONTACT Selection Committee.

Branch Submitting Nominee

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(Branch Presidents are requested to prioritize nominees before submitting.)

Name of Teacher Nominee

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School Address

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-----  
-----

Postal Code

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School Telephone

-----  
-----

Home Address

-----  
-----

Postal Code

-----  
-----

Home Telephone

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Have you attended CONTACT before?  No  Yes

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Teacher Nominee:

(qualifications, experience, interests and NLTA involvement)

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**Note:** Teachers may supplement this application with a letter expressing his/her interest and reasons for wishing to attend.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Branch  
President \_\_\_\_\_

BRANCHES MUST FORWARD NOMINEES TO NLTA OFFICE NO LATER THAN  
MAY 15, 1998.

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# FINDING OUR SOLUTIONS

by Kathy Burford

Teachers often have good ideas on how to resolve many of the stressful issues confronting them each day. This fact was clearly demonstrated at a teacher in-service I helped to facilitate recently. Workshop participants were involved in a small group exercise in which they were asked to identify some of their common work or personal stressors. They then used their collective wisdom (two heads are better than one) to find solutions to the particular problem they had identified. The exercise was such a positive experience that I asked their permission to share the results with other teachers who might benefit from the suggested solutions.

## **(1) Identified Problem Causing Stress:**

Work Overload —; multi-jobs, teaching plus too many tasks for the time available. Help!

### *Obstacles/Barriers to Solving the Problem:*

finances/monies are not available for hiring more teachers; time line is still there for things you don't get done.; there are things that parents cannot do —; they have their workloads too; ourselves —; we have trouble saying "no!" —; we are our own worst enemies.

### *Solutions to Barriers:*

money saved on education reform be put back into system; public access to government accounts (education); more support people to do typing, copying, extra-curricular activities, duties etc.; some parents "do" have extra time and are willing.

### *Solutions to Solve Problem:*

prioritize list of tasks to be completed on a daily basis —; deal with "have to's" first; hire more staff; enlist parents to help.

## **(2) Identified Problem Causing Stress:**

Coping with behaviour of students in a classroom session —; disruptive behaviours.

### *Obstacles/Barriers to Solving the Problem:*

lack of in-service to deal appropriately with problem situations; lack of parental support; grade levels; time to chart behaviours; classroom size (too large); lack of policies in place; lack of guidance/special services; "outside the classroom" can result in more serious problems.

### *Solutions to Barriers:*

more conferences/sharing and in-service; develop rapport with child and parents —; practice good P.R.; committee in charge of charting behaviour; detention classes; alternative measures for those who don't fit into our system; more conflict management for all teachers.

### *Solution to Solve Problem:*

time outside of the classroom environment; researching solutions to the "particular" problem; get enough sleep (be well rested); take note of patterns; do not take it personally; think before you act —; pause!; be consistent.

## **(3) Identified Problem Causing Stress:**

When a work related incident affects home life and can ruin an entire day.

### *Obstacles/Barriers to Solving the Problem:*

difficult to leave work at work —; human nature does not allow that; leave school as quickly as possible —; go somewhere before you go home; reluctant to discuss problem with others —; can make you feel incompetent; learn to relax first —; need time away from the problem to reflect; we don't know how to relax.

*Solutions to Barriers:*

leave —; be sensible —; you have to be good/kind to yourself (first!); trust yourself and others (there has to be someone you can trust); think of all possibilities —; widen your viewpoint —; nothing is carved in stone.

*Solutions to Solve Problem:*

learn to be adamant about leaving "work" at "work"; do not leave school at 3:00 on such a day —; take time to work the problem out at school; a confidante to help you work out the problem; learn to see the "other side" of the problem.

**(4) Identified Problem Causing Stress:**

Lack of time to do the insurmountable number of jobs teaching entails.

*Obstacles/Barriers to Solving the Problem:*

administration demands completion of duties —; all duties; some things you can't complete —; your back is against the wall; when stressed it is hard to relax; taking time away from family adds more stress; "unwise" amounts to do —; unreasonable workload; you are often expected to be perfect —; you are the teacher; if you are a new teacher, you could be looked down on; teachers involved in more are often "valued" more. (e.g. extra curriculum).

*Solutions to Barriers:*

value yourself.; be positive/proud that you give your best; meet administrators —; clarify roles/expectations of each side; time management —; set family time/day; accept your humanity (God alone is perfect).

*Solutions to Solve Problem:*

prioritize items; learn to say no; laugh; allocate time in personal schedule; use available time wisely; accept that you can only do what it is humanly possible to do; be happy with the decisions you make.

**(5) Identified Problem Causing Stress:**

Discipline - lack of interest shown by students.

*Obstacles/Barriers to Solving the Problem:*

time to do preparation of class time and having backups; dependence on support of others; lack of flexibility by administration to fulfill your solution; degree to which course can change yet remain as specified by objectives; ability of class.

*Solutions to Barriers:*

Get students involved (a largely untapped resource). They know what interests them, and respond well when trusted with power and encouraged to act responsibly. (1) Student ownership is key today. (2) Even most students of limited ability have a grasp of the computer world. (3) Delegating responsibility to students saves us time! (4) Students can be the "others we depend on!"

*Solutions to Solve Problem:*

talk to the individual (might have different problems); look at how we teach; how do we handle our own anger?; leaving situation —; not forgetting; dignity —; for me, the teacher, and the student; parents; Guidance Department; double checking students' abilities = 33; preparation of "your" class time and having backups.

As you read through these issues you may have found one or more that struck a familiar chord. It might have been one that you were struggling with yourself, or one that you solved on your own in a similar or different way. The main thing to keep in mind is that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. If something doesn't work for you, try something different, or as the workshop participants found out, sharing issues with colleagues can sometimes give a new perspective to an old problem.

If you are experiencing a work-related or personal problem, or would like information about the Employee Assistance Program for teachers, you can contact EAP Coordinators at the NLTA, Kathy Burford (Ext. 242) or Claudette Coombs (Ext.265).

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# GOIN' FOR GOALS

*edited by Lesley-Ann Browne*

St. John Bosco School in St. John's, in partnership with the St. John's Maple Leafs, has introduced an educational program designed to motivate students to improve on their academic performance. Early in the 1996-97 school year, a committee consisting of Len White, Principal, Don Devine, Assistant Principal, Todd Osmond, Guidance Counsellor, and Department Heads met with Glen Stanford, Director of Operations with the St. John's Maple Leafs, and presented a comprehensive program they believed would have a long-term, positive impact on the students at St. John Bosco. "Goin' for Goals", organized in conjunction with Brookfield-Popsicle, involves students from Kindergarten to Level III. Mr. White says the program provides students with an opportunity to set personal goals in a number of areas and acknowledges and rewards students who demonstrate improvement by providing incentives to reach these goals. The following is an outline of the many aspects of the program.

## **Student of the Month**

Each month teachers from Grades 7 to Level III nominate students whom they feel are worthy recipients of "Student of the Month". Monthly assemblies are organized to acknowledge these students with St. John's Maple Leafs players attending to assist with the distribution of certificates and to draw for prizes donated by the St. John's Maple Leafs organization. All students selected as "Student of the Month" receive certificates signed by Leaf coaches, Mark Hunter and Rich Brown, and by school principal, Len White. These students are also eligible to win prizes from the St. John's Maple Leafs.

## **Top Student of the Month**

One student from each of Grades 7 to Level III who displays the most significant improvement in his or her academic average is awarded "Top Student of the Month". As well, the Level I to III student and the Grade 7 to 9 student in the Honors Division (75% average or above) who displays the most significant improvement in his or her average is awarded the "Top Student of the Month" in the Honors category. These students receive a Maple Leafs plaque and are invited as guests of the St. John's Maple Leafs at the monthly awards luncheon at the Holiday Inn where they are recognized for their achievement. The "Top Student of the Month" also receives a personal letter of congratulations from coaches Mark Hunter and Rich Brown.

## **Elementary Student of the Month**

Each month elementary teachers select four students in their class to be honored as "Students of the Month". These are students who, in the opinion of their teachers, have been consistently working to the best of their ability or who have displayed significant improvement in their school work over a period of six weeks. These students receive certificates signed by St. John's Maple Leafs coaches Mark Hunter and Rich Brown, and Principal Len White. As well, they are invited to attend a St. John's Maple Leafs practice at Memorial Stadium, complete with a pizza party and visits from Maple Leafs players.

## **Buddy's Pals**

"Buddy's Pals" is designed for primary and elementary students to provide an opportunity to set and achieve academic goals and earn a certificate in Buddy's Pals Achievement Club. Buddy, the official mascot of the St. John's Maple Leafs, visits St. John Bosco every six weeks to distribute achievement certificates. Students awarded then have an opportunity to have their names entered in a draw to win Leafs prizes.

## **Top Class Award (Grades 7 to Level III)**

Each month the class in both Grades 7 to 9 and Levels I to III that demonstrates the most improvement academically receives the "Top Class Award". The top high school class are the guests of the St. John's

Maple Leafs at the monthly awards luncheon at Holiday Inn where they are introduced and recognized for their achievements. The top junior high class attends a St. John's Maple Leafs practice at Memorial Stadium, complete with a pizza party and visits from Maple Leafs players.

### Scholarship Program

At the conclusion of the school year, the most academically improved student in Level III receives the "Maple Leafs Most Improved Student of the Year" scholarship valued at \$250. Another scholarship, also valued at \$250, is awarded to the top academic student.

### Attendance Awards

Students in Grades 7 to Level III with perfect attendance from the beginning of the program until March receive a "Certificate of Perfect Attendance". Students who continue to maintain perfect attendance are recognized at monthly assemblies.

### Student of the Month (Junior/Senior High)

These are the students from each grade level from 7 to Level III who displayed the most overall improvement in their academic average. These students attended the St. John's Maple Leafs banquet in March 1997 and were presented with a Maple Leafs plaque at this assembly. Last year's winners were:

Grade 7:	Matthew Noseworthy	10% improvement
Grade 8:	Adam Doyle	18% improvement
Grade 9:	Joanne Whitten	18% improvement
Honors Category (Jr. High):		
	Troy Hannaford	10% improvement
Level I:	Michael Druken	28% improvement
Level II:	Darlene Rose	18% improvement
Level III:	Gerry King	9% improvement
Honors Category (High School):		
	Jimmy Spurrell	18% improvement

### Student of the Month (Elementary)

Certificates were presented to students from each class who had been selected by their teachers as students who have been consistently working to the best of their ability or who have displayed significant improvement in their school work over a period of six weeks. Each of these students received a certificate and attended the St. John's Maple Leafs' practice. A pizza party was provided by the Leafs at that time.

### Most Improved Class

During the month of March 1997 a challenge was issued to all Junior and Senior High classes. The class that demonstrated the most significant improvement in their overall class average received the distinction of most improved class. The winning class attended the monthly banquet held for the St. John's Maple Leafs at Holiday Inn. The following results of the challenge reflect the increase in academic performance per class. The first number represents the overall class average at the initiation of the challenge. The second number reflects the class average six weeks later.

Grade 8	66.9 67.5
Grade 8	72.0 75.0
Grade 9	67.7 69.8
Level I	62.6 77.28 (Winner)
Level I	65.8 75.02
Level I	

Level II	67.0 74.0
Level II	60.0 69.0

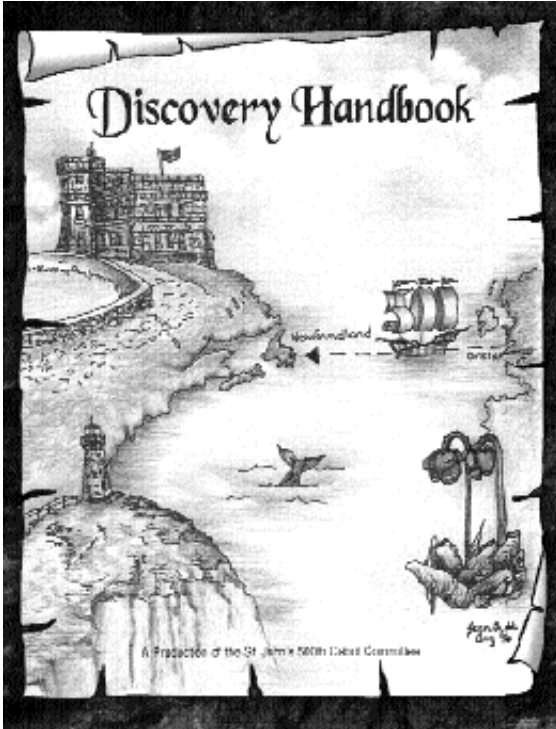
The staff at St. John Bosco believe that the Goin' for Goals program has had a significant impact on the students' motivation and academic esteem. "Students have raved about the program," says Mr. White. "We are truly grateful and thankful for this unique partnership and strongly believe that with continued support and commitment from the Leafs' organization, we can have an even more successful program next year."

In providing some of the measurable results of the program during the 1996-97 school year, Mr. White says it is important to note that it is extremely difficult to measure the impact of such a program on factors such as school climate, motivation, self-esteem and academics. "We are confident, however," says Mr. White, "that the results are a strong indication of the positive impact of this program on academic performance and we believe that this can be attributed to increased student motivation a result of the Goin' for Goals program."

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*This article was written in consultation with Todd Osmond, Guidance Counsellor at St. John Bosco School.*

# INTERNATIONAL AWARD WINNERS



The Discovery Handbook, a curriculum supplement designed by a group of St. John's teachers for the Cabot 500 anniversary, was the recipient of an international award recently. This past Fall the booklet was awarded top prize, the Gold Pinnacle Award, for the best new educational program by the International Festival and Events Association.

The Handbook was produced by a subcommittee of the City of St. John's 500th Cabot Schools' Committee. It was an all-volunteer group consisting of six St. John's area teachers: Karen Butt, St. Mary's Elementary; Mary Tracey-Feehan, St. John Bosco; Pauline Howlett, The Janeway School; Patricia Lawlor, St. Patrick's Hall; Hilda Pollard-Milley, (retired); and Kerri Whelan, St. Pius X Elementary and Junior High. In addition to designing and compiling the Handbook, they created most of the activities themselves but also added some submissions from across the province. The activities were designed for and used by teachers and students from Kindergarten to the post secondary level. The Handbook contains historical information about John Cabot, Newfoundland and Bristol.

As well, it includes a wide range of educational activities, from

15th century recipes to Cabot theme crosswords and math problems.

The Discovery Handbook was originally intended for schools in St. John's. However, with the generous support of Dicks and Company, it was possible to print a larger number of copies. The NLTA also assisted by distributing complimentary copies to all schools in the province. A number were also sent across the country and to some schools in the Bristol, England area as well.

The International Festival and Events Association is based in Washington DC and boasts such members as the Rose Bowl, the Edinburgh Festival and Disney World. Each year, that organization honours the best environmental, educational and other programs associated with major international events and attractions. In 1997, some 2,000 entries were submitted. Following an evaluation process, the winners were announced at the Association's annual convention, which was held in Montreal in October.

The Pinnacle Award was presented to the City of St. John's at the City Council's regular meeting on January 12, 1998. The award will be on permanent display at City Hall.

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# THANK YOU CLAYTON

*by Agnes Richard*

It is January 9, 1990 —; my birthday. However, the life of a high school English teacher dictates that celebration must be kept in check so as to allow time for the ever pressing demand of papers to be graded. The pile is particularly daunting tonight —; the briefcase is full as well as the plastic grocery bag beside it. It is tempting to walk away from this chore for this one night but the consequences of such an action will lead to a marathon grading session on Saturday and Sunday. So, "like a snail unwillingly to school", I tackle the mountain of papers.

This role of martyr (English teacher) is not resting too well with me tonight. Soft music, fluffed cushions, positioned ottoman —; all to make this task more palatable as I settle into my favorite spot in the living room. Let's make this as painless as possible —; the Macbeth assignment —; the creative project. When students responded well to the teaching of the play I generally offered a creative assignment which could be used to earn extra grades. The completion of such a project was totally voluntary but usually brought some interesting responses. Just the thing for a night such as this.

The hours slipped by as I marvelled at the many clever perceptions of differing aspects of the play. The epitaphs for those killed off by our protagonist were intriguing. The costumes designed for the banquet scene were fascinating. The newspaper stories of the hero's escapades were bloodcurdling. This task is not too bad after all.

11:45 p.m. —; I'll do just one more before I head off to bed. I dig out the audio cassette player to play the tape which Clayton had submitted as his creative project. It was a bit of a shock to see that he had undertaken this project at all. Clayton was not going to win the prize for perfect attendance this year. There were great gaps of time when I actually began to wonder just what he looked like. However, during our Macbeth sessions there had been moments —; he hadn't looked askance as I did my thing of dressing and acting as a witch to open the play. He had seemed attentive as I donned my Lady Macbeth costume for the sleepwalking scene. He even volunteered to read the part of Ross in one of our dramatized scenes and he had come to class regularly toting his text of the play. But it was still surprising to receive this voluntary assignment which Clayton had dropped nonchalantly into my briefcase as he announced that he had decided to try this creative thing to try to bring up his marks. Totally unexpected indeed in light of past performances.

The cassette player bursts into life —; it's Clayton's voice —; it is a Macbeth rap. I sit there fixated as the presentation continues. I chuckle to hear the line "So it's off with your head and have a nice day". By the end of the rap I am in tears. This is brilliant, innovative, clever adjectives are just not strong enough to describe the work.

Certainly an experience which must be shared, so it's down the hall and into the bedroom to play the whole thing for my husband. At this time of night he thinks I'm a bit touched, but he agrees that yes, it is quite interesting. Next it's into my teacher son's bedroom to let him hear this fascinating creation. A bit more enthusiasm here as he pronounces it a work of art.

Next morning I tote my audio cassette player with me to the staff room to let my colleagues marvel at this astounding work. I can hardly contain my excitement until literature class and time to share with my Macbeth students. Class time arrives. I decide to play it cool. Cassette player is in place, tape at the ready. As they settle down for work I ask them to lay aside their consideration of the Bartlett biography and listen to a tape to be discussed this morning. The change of pace is welcomed. There are no audible protests —; they don't have to write, they don't have to produce —; just plain listening is easy enough. Within a few

seconds the glazed looks change. There is a spark of recognition. They lean forward in their desks. They look toward Clayton's desk and nod approvingly. The tape ends. There is a burst of applause and cheers as the assignment is classed as "wicked". Clayton beams and grows two inches taller before my very eyes.

Questions from all sectors of the class. Clayton is on the spot. He admits that he had gotten the idea as he watched a television performance of rap music. Yes, it had taken quite a while to get all the ideas to flow just right. Yes, that was his own guitar and synthesizer used to provide the background music. And yes, he had "jigged" classes for two days to work on getting all the sounds together for this polished and professional finished product.

Now it was my turn for the hot seat as they demanded to know the grade which I had decided for this work. I admitted that indeed I had been generous and given a 24 out of 25 for after all, there were indeed some incorrect spellings in the written text. Mutiny was threatened and I gladly capitulated and readjusted the mark to a perfect score.

For days Clayton walked a little taller and I operated in that special glow which comes with having tangible evidence that you have reached at least one student on one topic. Our next genre for study in this literature class was the biography "Bartlett —; the Great Explorer", not at all to Clayton's liking.

Teaching can be difficult and all consuming. What keeps us going is the pride we can take from our students' accomplishments, and like childbirth, the difficult times and the pains are smothered in the remembrances of the joys. This incident was one of the enduring memories which I carry with me from my 30 years of work in the classroom.

Thank you Clayton, wherever you may be, you have left me with a birthday gift which I will forever cherish.

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*Agnes Richard retired from teaching in 1992. She was formerly an English, Literature, Language teacher at St. Paul's High School in Gander.*

### **Macbeth (and it ain't no Shakespeare)**

Here we go,  
Listen up people, 'cause I'm startin' this story  
Macbeth was out lookin' for some fame and glory.  
Spendin' all his time, out fightin' for his land  
He was top gun, head dude, Duncan's main man.  
Now this is where our story starts to get so serious,  
Three witches said he'd be king, and he went delirious.  
Duncan had to die, but Macbeth couldn't wait,  
Then he found he didn't have the heart, began to hesitate.

Now this is where his lady comes into this thing  
Saying' "Hey Big Mac, Don't ya wanna be king?"  
She said, "Take this knife go and carve you some roast  
And don't you come out until Duncan is toast."  
He nodded the affirmative and off he went,  
And ten minutes later old Duncan's life was spent.  
Old Mac was on a roll an' he said "What the Hell"  
An' then he ripped out Duncan's guts as well.

Then he was ruler all over the land  
Dealing out justice with an iron hand.  
Killin' anyone who got in his way,  
It was, "Off with your head, an' have a nice day."  
He went to see the witches, they were stirring their brew  
And he believed every word that they said was true.  
They went and called up, count them, three apparitions  
I don't know what it was maybe some kind of tradition.  
But he knew that it all was too good to last  
'Cause if something catches up on you it's usually your past.

His lady went crazy from imaginary stains,  
He watched her life slowly slipping down the drain.  
He knew it was over, he knew it was the end,  
He had nothing left to win, had nothing to defend.  
So he once again went fightin' his silly little war,  
But the enemy was waitin' outside his big front door.  
He knew for a fact that he wouldn't get far  
'Cause someone shot the driver of the get-away car.

I guess you all know just what happened then  
Our man got wasted, now that's the end.  
Macbeth, the Scottish king, from the year 1057  
Was taken out in battle, on his way to bagpipe heaven.  
So I hope he's not turnin' and I hope he's not upended.  
And if he's spinnin' in his grave, from what I've written here,  
Well all I'm sayin' is "Sorry Bill,  
But I ain't no Shakespeare".

And that's a wrap.

Clayton Brownlee  
St. Paul's High School  
Gander, Newfoundland

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# BRIDGING THE GAP

by *Marita Moll and Bernie Froese-Germain*

Claims that technology in the classroom will positively transform student learning are nothing new —; they have become part of our cultural mythology. Anyone at all familiar with the history of educational technology will recognize this 1920s prediction by Thomas Edison: "the motion picture is destined to revolutionize our educational system and in a few years it will supplant largely, if not entirely, the use of textbooks." Similar claims were made for radio, television, and B.F. Skinner's "teaching machines" —; all were supposed to revolutionize education, and all fell far short of their expectations. Information technologies in the form of computers and electronic networks are only the latest in a series of modern inventions which evoke the mythical connection between technology and education —; a connection which North Americans seem to regard as natural and inevitable. However, when we take another look at the research and current literature surrounding this connection, we find there are more questions than answers.

## **Observations on Technology and Student Learning**

In the present phase of technological euphoria, promoters have, for the most part, eagerly seized on isolated, short-term studies to support the technology/education connection. But the assumption that increasing the computer-student ratio in classrooms will result in better, faster and cheaper student learning is based less on fact than on wishful thinking. Over the past few years, many well-known researchers have warned about the absence of independent research indicating a strong correlation between the use of technological tools and the improvement of learning. In "Computers Meet Classroom: Classroom Wins" (Teachers College Record, 1990), Larry Cuban says "the research evidence on [the impact of computers on student learning, among other questions] is ambiguous and unhelpful in determining policy." In "Lever and Fulcrum: Educational Technology in Teachers' Thought and Practice" (Teachers College Record, 1991), Stephen Kerr points out that there is no proof that using technology in the classroom increases achievement.

More recent articles continue in this vein. In *Tech Hi: Globalization and the Future of Canadian Education* (1977), David Livingstone, professor and chair of the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, notes that the most thorough reviews of integrated learning systems, systems in which many schools have invested heavily, reveal "that most of these studies are of poor quality and typically overstate moderate effects". Todd Oppenheimer, in "Computer Delusions" (Atlantic Monthly, July 1995) points out that even Apple's Classrooms of Tomorrow (ACOT) project, which has donated over \$25 million worth of equipment to 13 schools and is one of the longest running efforts examining the impact of computers on the classroom, provides "scant evidence of greater student achievement."

Edward Miller, former editor of the Harvard Education Letter, is blunt in his assessment. In "Computer Delusions", he states that "the research [on computers in schools] is set up in a way to find benefits that aren't really there. Most knowledgeable people agree that most of the research isn't valid. It's so flawed it shouldn't even be called research." According to Miller, "once the faulty studies are weeded out the ones that remain 'are inconclusive' —; that is, they show no significant change in either direction."

## **Research Essentials**

Why is so much of the research on technology in the classroom flawed? Cleborne Maddux sheds some light on this question in his analysis of modern research in educational computing spanning approximately a 20 year period (Computers in the Schools, 11(3), 1995). He divides research shortcomings into two main categories: internal validity and external validity of research results.

On the subject of internal validity, Maddux notes that "the failure to adequately describe control group



activities" is a problem that has affected past research and continues to plague current research, one which makes interpretation of studies difficult. Simply describing control group activities as "traditional" instruction or curriculum, which doesn't involve the use of computers is unacceptable because "it has become clear that type of instruction and various learner variables are infinitely more powerful than is the medium by which such instruction is provided." Another factor contributing to poor internal validity, particularly in previous studies, is "the failure to control for possible interactions among teaching and learning variables" —; such variables include student age, grade, gender, IQ, computer experience or expertise, mastery of the application being studied, teaching method, and duration of teaching among others.

On the subject of the external validity of results, Maddux observes that "the results of much recent research cannot reasonably be generalized to typical public school settings. This is true because many such studies are carried out under ideal conditions, particularly with regard to amount and quality of hardware and software." Such ideal conditions might well include increasingly rare small class sizes.

An editorial that appeared in the Ottawa Citizen (December 1995) reinforces this latter point and its political implications. Commenting on former Ontario Minister of Education, John Snobelen's plan to put a computer on the desk of each of the province's 1.9 million pupils at a cost of \$4 billion, it cautioned against being "dazzled by success stories such as the oft-cited River Oaks elementary school in well-off Oakville" because, "as everyone who has studied technology in schools can attest, it is deceptive to extrapolate from specific, properly established programs to the province's entire school population." This is a warning we would do well to heed, particularly when school funding is being drastically curtailed in other areas such as school libraries, music and arts programs and support staffing for special needs programs.

### **Research Processes**

A 1993 U.S. government report, *Using Technology to Support Education Reform* (Barbara Means et al.), describes the major research approaches used in studying the effects of technology on student achievement:

- "horse race" studies —; These studies compare the use of technology-based instruction with conventional instruction. According to the authors, the limitations of these studies include the failure to control for the many variables in learning environments; therefore, "when differences are found, there is no defensible logic to attributing them to a technology medium rather than to instructional content or method, instructor or student characteristics, or some interaction among these variables." This reinforces some of Maddux's observations noted earlier.
- contextualized research —; This approach evolved as a result of the problems with the "horse race" studies. It seeks to consider the numerous other variables at play in what is described as the complex "culture of the classroom". The authors note that contextualized research recognizes "that student performance will be affected not just by hardware and software but also by the way a particular class or student uses the technology and the culture of the classroom." They conclude however that the "extent to which these successes can be replicated within the existing educational system remains to be demonstrated." Echoing this viewpoint, the authors of *Computers and Classrooms: The Status of Technology in U.S. Schools*, a recent study by the U.S. Educational Testing Service, describe the "more cognitive applications of [educational] technology," (such as those designed to promote problem solving or critical thinking), as being "more difficult to evaluate —; the research data are less extensive, the data that exist are harder to organize, and new evaluation designs are often needed."

### **Research Blinders**

The lack of solid evidence that computers will enhance learning has not deterred the advocates of increased technology in the schools. The absence of critical thinking in this area was blatantly evident in the 1994 report of the Ontario Royal Commission on Learning, *For the Love of Learning*. The Commission identified technology as one of four "engines" driving educational reform. Reaction from some sectors of the educational research community was swift and to the point. In *Ring Some Alarm Bells in Ontario: Reactions*

to the Report of the Royal Commission on Learning (1996), Catherine Beattie, associate professor in the Department of Philosophy at McMaster University, notes that, "although the authors [of the Royal Commission report] claim that their 'scenario' for a 'transformed school system' is based on 'solid research' , the references for the chapter on information technology include virtually nothing on the work of critics of computer use in schools. Indeed, no fewer than one-fifth of their references are to one issue of a practice-oriented education journal [Educational Leadership] which is devoted to 'success' stories. It is worth noting that the opening quote for the Report's chapter on the fourth 'engine' is taken from a contribution to this journal which bears the copyright of the Apple Computer Company and was written by the manager of the 'apple classrooms of tomorrow' (ACOT) project. Moreover, the school in Ontario chosen for special praise is an ACOT school and research done there is cited as support for expanded computer use. It's a sign of the times."

Such wake-up calls remain unheeded as governments continue to put a priority on funding technology in the schools, including supporting elaborate fund-matching schemes which promote school/business partnerships. Audrey Lampert (Canadian School Executive, June 1996) asks: "Is it morally right to use recently developed information technology without the benefit of research and studies to test its educational worth?". Unfortunately, our historical experience with technology in general has been one of implement first, ask the difficult social and ethical questions later, if at all.

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*Marita Moll is Head of Research and Technology and Bernie Froese-Germain is Research Assistant with the Canadian Teachers' Federation.*

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# RESOURCES

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## **"B" is for Bully**

"B" is for Bully, a children's musical for elementary school children, is part of a study guide addressing the issue of bullying in today's schools. The guide includes: the complete script and musical score for the play "B" is for Bully; background information about bullying and strategies to deal with it; ways to use the play to initiate classroom discussion; suggestions for how to produce the play; bibliography of resources for anti-bullying education; and activities related to anti-bullying education including art and language projects, games and dances. To order, contact Alan Gotlib, 87 Monarch Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M4J 4R1; Tel: 416-466-7040; Fax: 416-698-2120; e-mail: rbrass@astral.magic.ca. The teacher's edition, including play and music —; \$34.95; package of 16 scripts —; \$30; accompaniment on audio cassette —; \$10.

## **Heritage Foundation Web Site**

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador is hosting a web site intended to improve awareness of Newfoundland's built heritage. The site contains information on the activities of the Foundation and its granting and designation programs. It also contains a great deal of historical information presented in a fairly basic manner to serve as a valuable tool for teaching local and provincial history. Photographs and short historical sketches of designated buildings from communities all across the province are also included, as well as an online glossary of architectural terms. The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador web site can be found on the internet at: <http://www.avalon.nf.ca/heritage>.

## **YTV In Class Lesson Plans available on the Internet**

YTV's in-class materials are now available electronically. Teachers can download award-winning lesson plans in Mac and PC formats through the YTV In Class web site: <http://inclass.ytv.com>. This site also includes listings of YTV programs that teachers may tape for use in class in conjunction with the lesson plans. YTV's teacher-written lesson plans cover a range of topics pertaining to telemediacy. Suitable for Grades 5 through high school, they accompany the copyright-cleared, commercial-free programs telecast during the Cable in the Classroom block (Mondays from 6 to 7 a.m. Eastern/Pacific). To comment on YTV's in-class materials or for information on YTV In Class, contact YTV Canada, Box 369, Station C, Toronto, Ontario, M6J 3N1, Tel: 416-534-6565, Ext. 477; Fax: 416-534-5786; e-mail: [outreach@ytv.ca](mailto:outreach@ytv.ca); Internet site: <http://inclass.ytv.com>; web site: [ytv.ca](http://ytv.ca).

## **1880's Newfoundland: A Pictorial**

The Provincial Information and Library Resources Board has launched an Internet web site entitled 1880's Newfoundland: A Pictorial. This web site presents photographs depicting life in late 19th century Newfoundland and Labrador in St. John's, the North East Coast, the Burin Peninsula and coastal Labrador communities. The photographs give Canadians a glimpse of a time now beyond living memory —; about Newfoundland life and society almost 70 years before it joined Canada. The site also includes rare pictures of St. John's buildings and streets before the great fire of 1892. 1880's Newfoundland: A Pictorial is valuable to students looking for information on Newfoundland and Labrador's history and outport lifestyle. This project was developed under a contract to Industry Canada as part of the Schoolnet Digital Collections Program. Contact: <http://www.schoolnet.ca/collections>.

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# CALENDAR of Upcoming Events

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## **Classroom Connections Workshop**

March 21, 1998

The Battery Hotel, St. John's. 8:30 - 12:30. Choose any two of the following presentations: "Classroom Management" by Kathy Hickman; "Discipline Strategies" by Ben Gale; and "The Organized Teacher" by Anna Matchim. Cost: \$15.00 per person; late registration is \$20.00 (after March 17).

To register, call Edwina at 709-754-2772; Fax: 709-738-0017.

## **MARGARET WILLIAMS TRUST FUND AWARD**

March 28, 1998 (deadline for applications)

Applications are invited for the Margaret Williams Trust Fund Award which has been established to promote the development of librarianship in Newfoundland and Labrador. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis to applicants seeking funding for library related projects or assistance in pursuing graduate studies in Library Science. Annual awards generally approximate \$1,000. Contact: Richard Ellis, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Margaret Williams Trust Fund, Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NF, A1B 3Y1.

## **School Administrators' Conference**

April 1-3, 1998

Glynmill Inn, Corner Brook. Theme: Charting New Directions. Contact: Victor May, Tel: 709-635-2337; Fax: 709-635-2995.

## **8th Annual Pathfinder Conference**

April 16-17, 1998

Vancouver, B.C. Theme: Lifelong Learning Beyond the 20th Century. Cost: \$300 early registration. Contact: Elaine Murphy, Conference Coordinator, Pathfinder Learning Systems Corporation, 133 Richmond Street West, Toronto, ON, M5H 2L3; Tel: 1-888-768-8328 (toll-free) or 416-361-1293; Fax: 416-361-3555; e-mail: emurphy@pathfinder.ca.

## **Substitute Teachers**

May 22-24, 1998

St. John's. Contact: Jill Howlett, Tel: 709-576-4061 (s) or 709-739-6397 (h).

## **18th Annual Conference of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education**

June 24-27, 1998

Mount Allison University, Sackville, NB. Theme: The Voices of Learning: Student and Teacher. Contact: STLHE Conference, c/o Dr. Bob Hawkes, Department of Physics, Mount Allison University, Sackville, NB, E0A 3C0; Fax: 506-364-2583; e-mail: stlhe98@mta.ca; web site: <http://www.mta.ca/stlhe98>.

## **Modern Languages Council**

October 22-23, 1998

Delta Hotel, St. John's. Contact: Paul Edwards, Tel: 709-754-0083.

## **Festival 500: Sharing the Voices**

July 1-11, 1999

An international festival of choral music. Concerts, workshops, provincial touring. Massed youth and adult choir performances. Many opportunities to perform and learn including *The Phenomenom of Singing* —; an academic symposium. Deadline for choir consideration is May 15, 1998. Contact: Festival 500, 7 Plank Road, St. John's, NF, A1E 1H3; Tel: 709-738-6013; Fax: 709-738-6014.