

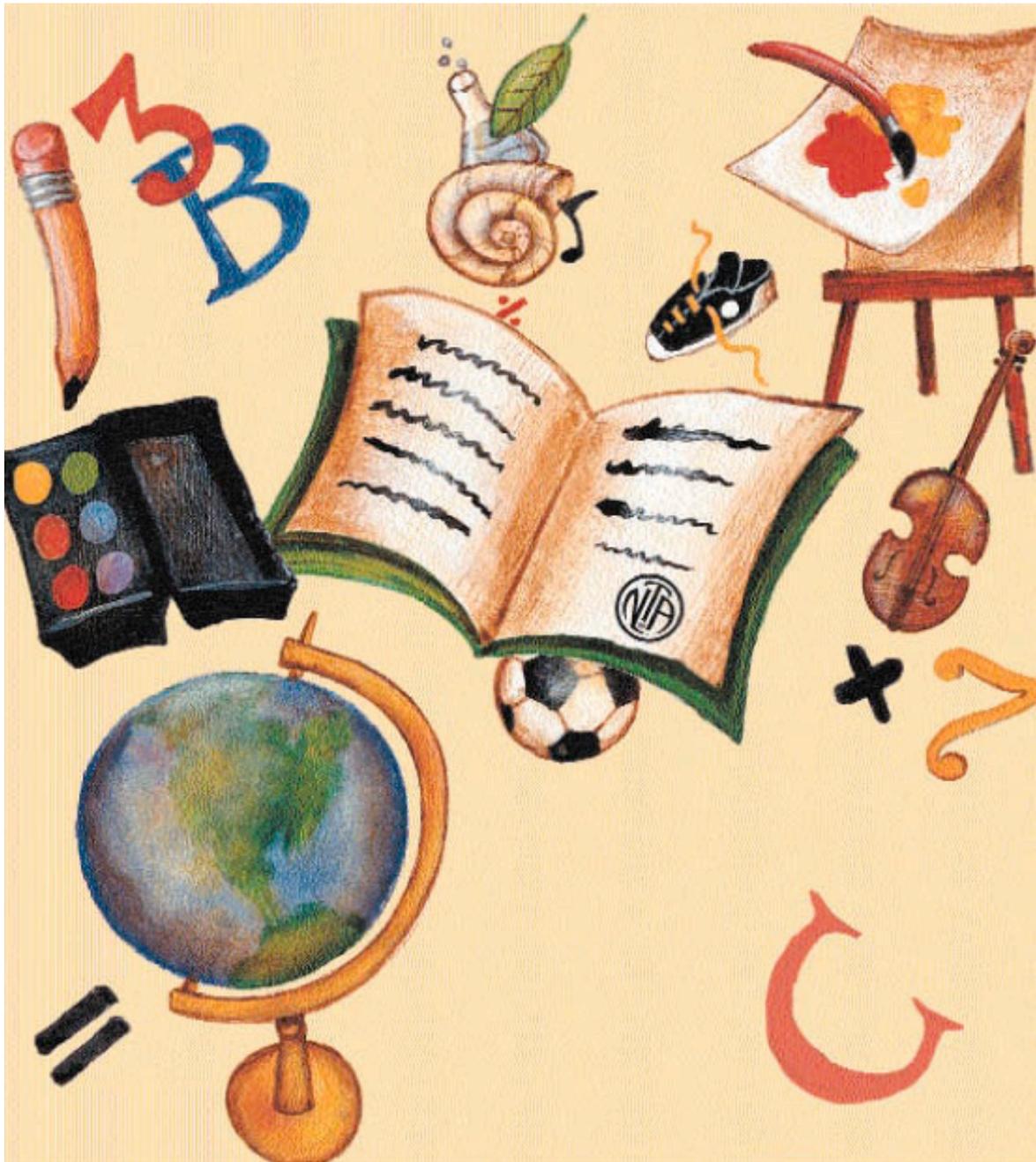
THE  
**bulletin**

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Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

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# RIFFRAFF, RESTRUCTURING, AND RESPONSIBILITY

by [Lesley-Ann Browne](#)

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I sat in a restaurant on Valentine's Day enjoying brunch when a conversation from a nearby table caught my attention. If it had not been 11:00 a.m., I would have thought one man was a loud obnoxious drunk. But he was not, he was just a loud, obnoxious person. To say I was annoyed was an understatement. I am angry and shocked by the opinions and attitudes that I heard that morning and by others in recent weeks.

They were discussing the recent school restructuring by the Avalon East School Board and how the education system is undergoing change. This on the surface was nothing to get angry about but one part of their conversation was.

I realize that we all have different opinions and that we will all never agree. I am usually very considerate of this fact and of the opinions of others, no matter how far away they are from my own way of thinking. But when I heard them say that because of the restructuring that the "good" kids will go to school with the "riffraff" I got hot under the collar. To label any one as riffraff is bad enough, but to say that their kids are better than others and that the riffraff, which means worthless people, the rubbish, should not be in the same school with their kids, is despicable. Protecting your children and wanting the best for them is one thing, but these attitudes are planting seeds of bigotry and bias that will grow and not help anyone.

Another comment was how students did not want to go to a new school because of a program that provides support to teenage mothers. The comment was, "Do you know what types of people go there?" I am shocked that anyone could believe that because a teenage girl gets pregnant that she is "riffraff." Besides being insulting this borders on an incredibility frightening prejudice.

Yet another opinion I have heard expressed was questioning the french immersion programs moving into different schools. The comment was, "why put french immersion in those schools where the kids will never use it?" So, is french immersion only for the nice schools, for the nice neighborhoods? Are programs for pregnant teens only for the lower class kids? I think there is something immensely wrong with these attitudes.

I keep trying to be positive and hope that we have not lost the real issues about school restructuring. I fear that peoples' bias are the real reasons why they do not want their son or daughter in a school, in a certain neighborhood and that distance and neighborhoods are being used by some as excuses. What about the best education possible for all students? An education where instruction takes place by qualified, dedicated teachers, with sufficient resources, and inservicing so teachers can teach new and up to date programs. Why is nobody talking about these issues?

So to those people who ruined my Valentine's Day brunch, I would like to say that although you angered me, I do feel sorry for you. I hope your children see through the bias and the discrimination. That they learn to judge people for who they are. Not by how much money is in their pocket, or the neighborhood they live in, or the school they attend. It's time to take responsibility, to make changes to schools or neighborhoods with "reputations." And, if the opinions of my fellow diners on Valentine's Day morning are the norm, then I'll take the riffraff over them, any day.

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Special Matters Beyond 2000:  
Newfound Frontiers

## INSTITUTE '99

Newfoundland Council for Exception Children

St. John's Newfoundland  
November 11--;13

### ----- Call for Papers -----

Presenter: (type/print) \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone: e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please attach similar information for co-presenters

Title of presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Abstract: (Brief, informative summary of not more than 40 words for the Conference program.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Length of presentation:

1 hour  1 1/2 hours  2 Linked Sessions of 1 hour each

2 Linked Sessions of  hour each

Type: Lecture  Panel  Experiential  Research Report

Other: (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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AV Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Other special requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Send proposal by May 1, 1999 to:**

Edie Dunphy

[edunphy@stemnet.nf.ca](mailto:edunphy@stemnet.nf.ca)

Telephone: (709) 437-5775

or

Carol Fitzpatrick

(709) 754-2919

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All presenters are responsible for their registration fees and personal expenses.

Presentations will be at Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's Campus.

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## Provincial / National / International **NEWS**

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### **ST. JOHN'S**

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#### **NLTA scholarship awarded**

Susan Brocklehurst has been named 1998 recipient of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association Scholarship.

Ms. Brocklehurst is presently attending Memorial University and will convocate this Spring with a Bachelor of Arts (double major History and Folklore) and will complete her Bachelor of Education (Elementary) in December 1999.

The NLTA Memorial University Scholarship is awarded annually on the basis of academic excellence and character to a senior student enrolled in the Faculty of Education. The award is made by the MUN Senate Committee on Scholarships, acting on the recommendation of the Dean of Education.

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### **MANUELS**

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#### **Education Week Opening Ceremonies**

The Opening Ceremonies for Education Week 1999 were held on Monday, March 1 at Holy Spirit High School in Manuels.

The event was attended by representatives from the NLTA, the Department of Education, schools in the Conception Bay South area, the Mayors of Paradise and Conception Bay South, and parents of children taking part in the ceremonies. Performing for invited guests were the Holy Spirit Concert Band, directed by Katie Sullivan; the St. Thomas of Villa Nova Grade 3/4 Choir and the St. Thomas of Villa Nova Elementary Choir, directed by Susanne O'Keefe; the Holy Spirit Jazz Choir and the Holy Spirit Girls' Choir, directed by Cathy Dinn and accompanied by Meghan Gregory; and the Queen Elizabeth High School Improv Group, directed by Coach Adam Stead and sponsored by teacher Pam Rhodenizer.

The Education Week proclamation was read in both official languages by Cassandra Fitzgerald, a Grade 4 French Immersion student from St. Peter's Primary in Mount Pearl, and Matthew Bailey, a Grade 3 student at Paradise Elementary.

For the first time Education Week Opening Ceremonies could be viewed by all students and teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador. In conjunction with STEM~Net, the events were webcast to all schools who wished to view them. According to STEM~Net, in all, 255 connections were made to the webcast.

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### **WHITBOURNE**

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#### **Above and beyond the call of duty**

While on a field trip recently, Laura Smith, a Grade 8 student from Whitbourne Elementary began gasping for air after a candy became lodged in her airway. After several attempts to clear the object herself, Laura began to panic causing further distress.

Mrs. Lisa George, a teacher at Whitbourne Elementary grabbed Laura from behind and pulled hard several times in performing the Heimlich maneuver. The procedure was successful and following a check by a doctor who happened to be in attendance, Laura reported none the worse for her ordeal.

Mrs. George, the hero of the moment however, was rather shaken by the situation but acted swiftly and properly in saving the student.

In commenting on the ordeal, Laura said, "Mrs. George saved my life. I wouldn't be here if it weren't for her. Others would have panicked, but not her, for that I am very grateful."

From your students (particularly Laura), the entire school body, and your fellow colleagues, we wish to extend our thanks to our own local hero.

### **Giving from the heart**

On February 16, students and staff at the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Center participated in a Valentine's Day celebration as part of the Janeway Day in the Schools fundraiser held each year around Valentine's Day. A special meal was prepared for teachers and students by the kitchen staff. Students completed various poems, cards and posters depicting the amorous holiday. As one student commented, "I was in the Janeway lots of times. The least I can do is help kids in there now." The event culminated with 42 students voluntarily donating \$200.97 to the Janeway Child Health Care Centre.

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## **NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR**

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### **1999 Heritage Fairs**

On May 13-15, school gymnasiums from North River, Conception Bay to North West River in Labrador will come alive with multi-media displays of heritage and culture. The exhibits are part of the Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Fair Programme, which will see seven regional fairs happen around the province this spring. The fairs are part of a network of similar events being held across the country thanks to the hard work of local volunteer committees.

The Heritage Fair Programme is an initiative of the Charles R. Bronfman Foundation known for its popular television services, "The Heritage Minutes". The first Heritage Fair was held in St. John's in 1997 to coincide with the Cabot 500 Celebrations. Last year the Fair Programme expanded to Clarenville, Burin, Grand Falls, Corner Brook, Goose Bay, and Labrador City.

For further information, contact Mary Tracey-Feehan, Provincial Coordinator, Tel: 709-753-4315 or 709-753-9262; Fax: 709-579-3753.

### **Women of Distinction Awards**

The YMCA-YWCA of St. John's invites nominations for the 1998 Women of Distinction Awards. The awards recognize women of Newfoundland and Labrador who have made outstanding achievements in a chosen field and who are wonderful role models for other women.

The deadline for nominations is no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 30, 1999. The award will be presented at the Women of Distinction Awards Brunch on May 30, 1999.

For further information contact Maxine Mercer at 709-754-2960, YMCA-YWCA of St. John's, Women of Distinction Awards, P.O. Box 21291, St. John's, NF, A1A 5G6.

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### **A lifetime of helping**

April 18 to 24 is Volunteer Week in Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada. This year is the International Year of Older Persons and the Volunteer Week Planning Committee will be focusing on recognizing older Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have contributed throughout their lives to the health and well-being of the province.

"Volunteering has been an extremely important part of my life here in Newfoundland," says Dr. Jean Bruneau, Chair of Volunteer Week 1999. "One of the most important roles of the older volunteer is that of a mentor. I have met many wonderful volunteer leaders who served as mentors for me in my volunteer work. I hope in turn that I have supported and fostered a commitment to volunteer services in younger volunteers I come in contact with, as well as my own children."

Newfoundland and Labrador has a long history of volunteer service. This Volunteer Week let's show appreciation to the individuals who helped develop the voluntary groups and organizations that serve us, who encouraged and supported the involvement of younger volunteers and who continue to take a leadership role in so many areas. Let's celebrate Volunteer Week and the International Year of the Older Person together.

For more information on Volunteer Week contact the Community Services Council, Volunteer Centre at 709-753-9860 or check out their web site at [www.csc.nf.net](http://www.csc.nf.net).

### **Call for classroom stories**

Three instructors working in the Faculty of Education at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, are collecting stories from Canadian classrooms to create a casebook for teacher education. Specifically, they are looking for stories that speak to one or more of the following topics: classroom management; curriculum development and implementation; evaluation and reporting; special education; practice teaching; native classrooms and/or native rights; violence in the classroom and student violence; beginning teaching; cultural diversity; administration; professional development; technology in the classroom; and others.

Stories will be collected by interview. These interviews may occur either in person or by telephone and are expected to take about 60 minutes. All stories are confidential. To participate in a brief screening interview (10-15 minutes), please contact: Anne Elliott or Vera Woloshyn, Faculty of Education, Brock University, St. Catharines, ON, L2S 3A1, Tel: 905-688-5550 ext. 3934, 4302 or 3340; fax: 905-688-0544; e-mail: [aelliott@ed.brocku.ca](mailto:aelliott@ed.brocku.ca) or [vera@ed.brocku.ca](mailto:vera@ed.brocku.ca).

### **National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth**

Since 1994, the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), a joint survey sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada, has collected information that has helped governments and researchers understand the social, physical and cognitive development of children in Canada. This unique study of Canadians from birth to adulthood provides a single source of data for the study of child development in context, including the diverse life paths of normal development. The NLSCY is designed to follow a representative sample of about 20,000 Canadian children, with data collection occurring at two-year intervals.

In the spring of 1999 Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada will again be collecting information from teachers of the children in the sample who are attending school. Your school may be selected for participation and teachers may be asked to provide information about a few students in their classrooms. This data collection will be the third such exercise of the NLSCY; as before, the success of the

survey depends on the cooperation of dedicated principals and teachers as well as parents and children.

A body of research based on the survey data was released at a conference this past fall, "Investing in Children: A National Research Conference, 1998", and is available on the conference Web site: [www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb/conferences/nlscyconf/](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb/conferences/nlscyconf/). Other research was published in 1996 in Growing Up in Canada, available from Statistics Canada, and in various issues of The Daily and the Education Quarterly Review, Statistics Canada publications. For further information refer to the Statistics Canada web site:

[www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca).

### **Demande d'aide et d'informations**

Le programme de la Troupe de la Confédération célèbre son 10e anniversaire cette année. Le programme engage des étudiants bilingues interprètes vivants de l'histoire, qui reproduisent l'histoire de la Confédération du Canada, plus particulièrement de tout ce qui est en lien avec la conférence de Charlottetown de 1864.

Cette année nous sommes à la recherche de ressources publiées en français afin de soutenir notre processus de formation. Pouvez-vous nous donner des titres de livres ou d'articles en français, que vous connaissez, qui nous fourniront des renseignements à propos des sujets suivants?: l'avant Confédération au Canada; la conférence de Charlottetown; les Pères de la Confédération; la conférence de Québec de 1864; la rébellion de 1837; les politiques de la Confédération.

Des références aux écrits scolaires sont aussi les bienvenues et des copies de n'importe quels articles disponibles seraient des plus appréciées. Pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez contacter Joan Cumming, tél: 902-629-1864.

### **The Insurance Institute of Canada**

The Insurance Institute of Canada offers full scholarships to 24 high school teachers to attend the Insurance Education Institute at the University of Calgary.

Teachers are invited to spend two weeks at the end of July learning about insurance at the Faculty of Insurance and Risk Management. Teachers are taught by professors of this faculty and earn a full M.Ed. credit issued by the Faculty of Education of the University of Calgary. Teachers are only responsible for their flight to Calgary and their spending money. The Insurance Institute of Canada pays for tuition, texts, room and board.

The deadline for registration is May 1. For further information contact Marnie Peter, Communications Officer, The Insurance Institute of Canada, e-mail: [mpeter@iic-iac.org](mailto:mpeter@iic-iac.org); Tel: 416-362-8586, ext. 233; Fax: 416-362-4239.

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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

bbbbb

# TAX TREATMENT

by Edward Hancock

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The NLTA Office on occasion receives inquiries from teachers concerning the Revenue Canada rules pertaining to certain employment-related expenses. The Economic Services Division at the Canadian Teachers' Federation maintains updated information on this issue and provides regular updates to teacher organizations across the country. The following information was recently received from CTF.

CTF, for a number of years, has been pursuing, on behalf of teachers, a number of issues related specifically to the tax treatment of employment and professional development expenses and Revenue Canada rules pertaining to pension plans and retirement. We will be continuing those efforts.

There are recent changes in the tax treatment of certain employment-related expenses that will be of interest to teachers. An increase in the education tax credit and its extension to part-time students in qualifying programs took effect in the 1998 taxation year.

We are providing an update on circumstances applicable for the 1998 tax year to the use of your own vehicle, the cost of supplies and an office at home and the education tax credit and tuition fees.

## 1. Use of Your Own Vehicle

You may qualify to deduct certain automobile expenses if the following three conditions are met: (1) you are ordinarily required to work away from your employer's place of business or to work in several places; (2) you are required to pay your own travelling expenses; and (3) you do not receive a tax free allowance per kilometre.

► **Operating Costs** include gas, repairs, and car washes to the extent they relate to your employment. Driving between home and work is considered personal except where you travel from home to a business call at the start of the work day or return home from a business call at the close of your work day. Detailed records are necessary to separate employment-related use from personal use.

► **Capital Cost Allowance (depreciation).** You are permitted to deduct capital cost allowance on the employment-related use of your car up to a total cost of \$25,000 plus GST and PST for vehicles purchased after 1996. Related interest expense is limited to \$250 per month. Leasing costs are deductible up to \$550 per month, plus GST and PST for leases entered into after 1996.

## 2. Cost of Supplies and Office at Home

If your contract of employment requires you to pay for any supplies used in your classroom or to maintain an office at your own expense, you may deduct some of the expenses involved. (Tax Form T2200, "Declaration of Conditions of Employment," must be filed and signed by your employer.)

► **Supplies.** The Income Tax Act permits you to deduct the cost of certain supplies consumed directly in your teaching duties, provided your contract of employment requires you to supply and pay for these items. Unfortunately, supplies used by teachers are restricted to "stationery items (other than books) such as pens, pencils paper clips, charts, etc., used by teachers." Equipment and material not consumed during the school year (e.g., computers and software) is specifically excluded.

► **Office at Home.** If your contract of employment requires you to maintain an office at your own expense, you are permitted to deduct certain expenses provided either: (1) the office is where you primarily perform your duties of employment; or (2) the office is used exclusively to earn income from employment, and it is used for meeting clients on a regular and continuous basis in the course of performing your duties of employment. Very few teachers or other employed persons qualify for this deduction.

### **3. Tuition Fees and Educational Status**

► **Tuition Fees.** Tuition fees paid for yourself, in excess of a threshold level of \$100 qualify for a 17% federal credit. Tuition fees paid for your child, spouse or other person cannot be claimed, subject to transfer rules discussed below. To qualify, the fees must be paid to a Canadian post-secondary institution or to an institution certified by Human Resources Development Canada. Fees paid to universities outside Canada for full-time enrolment in degree programs qualify as well. Fees to private elementary or secondary schools do not qualify for the credit, but religious private schools may treat a portion of private tuition fees as a charitable donation toward the school's religious instruction.

► **Educational Status.** As well as the credit for tuition fees, you are entitled to a further educational status credit of \$34.00 per month (federal credit is equivalent to 17% of \$200) during which you were in full-time attendance at a post-secondary institution. Effective in the 1998 taxation year, the education credit was extended to part-time students enrolled in eligible programs lasting at least three consecutive weeks and involving a minimum of 12 hours of courses each month. For each month of part-time attendance they are entitled to claim \$10.20 (i.e. 17 percent of \$60.00).

► **Transfers.** Students unable to use their tuition and education credits, because they have no tax to pay, may transfer up to \$850 in federal tax credits for the two credits combined, to a spouse, parent or grandparent.

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[Edward Hancock](#) is Assistant Executive Director with the NLTA.

# PENSION PLAN FOR SUBSTITUTES

by Perry Downey

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Since September 1, 1989, substitute teachers have had available to them a pension plan. This plan is currently referred to as the Government Money Purchase Pension Plan (GMPP) and is classified as a Defined Contribution Plan. With a Defined Contribution Plan, the contributions made while teaching are specified or defined in advance. The amount of pension income receivable at retirement is not fixed or guaranteed. Instead, it will depend on the value of investment and annuity rates at the time of retirement. Contributions to the GMPP are made by both the employee and the employer. While a member of the GMPP, substitute teachers contribute five percent, matched by government as the plan sponsor. A substitute teacher may also make voluntary contributions in addition to the required contribution as long as all contributions are within the allowable limits defined under Revenue Canada Taxation provisions.

The GMPP is currently administered by Canada Trust. This group of investment consultants control the general handling of the money on behalf of the Pensions Division at the Department of Finance. Membership within this plan is compulsory for all substitute teachers. However, a substitute teacher who teaches for 20 or more consecutive days or who enters into a replacement contract will contribute to the Main Pension Plan (TPP).

Under the GMPP provisions, substitute teachers are required to contribute five percent of their regular earnings each year through payroll deduction. The Provincial Government, the employer, will match these contributions, for a combined total contribution each year of 10 percent of the regular earnings. Substitute teachers may also make additional voluntary contributions to the plan to help their retirement savings grow even faster. Voluntary contributions can be made through payroll deductions or lump sum contributions by cheque. The total of the five percent required contribution, the five percent employer match and one's voluntary contribution must not exceed the maximum amount allowed by Revenue Canada each year (currently 18 percent of one's current year's earnings or \$13,500, whichever is less). Individual substitutes are responsible for monitoring their contribution level to ensure that their plan does not exceed the limit.

To provide equal opportunity for all individuals to tax shelter their retirement savings, there is an overall limit that applies to contributions made to registered plans such as your GMPP. Contributions made to GMPP (employee and employer) reduces the contribution room available in RRSP's. Contributions are reported as a Pension Adjustment (PA) on your T4 slip and are used in the calculation of an individual's RRSP contribution limit. Employee contributions are tax deductible, employer contributions are not deductible, or taxable as income until withdrawn from the plan. In order to monitor the amount of contribution and the gains you have received through interest income, Canada Trust will issue quarterly statements of your account and will mail them directly to your home address. Canada Trust also provides 1-800 toll free service for information and investment advice during week days from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EST) and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. For information and service, call 1-800-668-2648 during the times specified.

## **Being Vested in the GMPP: What Does Vesting Mean?**

Vesting means the right to receive --; or entitled to ownership of --; employer contributions and investment earnings on those contributions in your plan. Usually, vesting refers to the length of time an individual must be employed or a member of a plan before employer contributions belong to the employee. Vesting becomes important when withdrawals are made from a plan, which for a pension plan is when the employee leaves the company, retires or dies. Your vesting provisions may be affected by provincial and/or federal regulations.

## How Does it Work?

1. Your plan sponsor determines the vesting period that applies, subject to minimum standards set by provincial and/or federal regulations and depending on the type of plan.
2. Vesting can be immediate, which means that any contribution made by an employer immediately becomes the possession of the employee, or deferred, which means that you do not own employer contributions until a certain time period has elapsed.
3. In addition, vesting can be based on plan membership, years of service, age or on a formula which allows a certain percentage of employer contributions to become vested each year.

Under the GMPP, a substitute teacher is vested upon completion of two years of plan membership. If you are vested and locked in, it means that you are not allowed to withdraw the value of your account in cash, but must use those funds to purchase certain types of retirement income for life.

## Vesting Criteria

There are three criteria which determine when you will become vested and/or locked in. These are outlined in the GMPP Act or in the Pensions Benefit Act. They are listed below:

1. Completion of two years of plan membership --; if you have become vested after January 1, 1997, under the two year criteria, only those contributions received after this date will be vested and locked in. Prior employee contributions may be withdrawn only upon termination, retirement or death. All employer contributions prior to the date will be forfeited.
2. Completion of five years of plan membership --; you are vested and all contributions are locked in.
3. Completion of ten years continuous service with the same employer, and attain the age of 45 --; you are vested and locked in.

It is very important for substitute teachers to realize into which category of vesting criteria they are considered as a member of the GMPP plan.

One of the major difficulties encountered by the Pensions Division at the Department of Finance is in reaching substitute teachers on an annual basis. We suspect this is caused by the frequent relocation of substitute members and in light of this the Pensions Division is requesting that substitute teachers advise them of change of address on each occasion. This information can be directed to Mr. Fred Simms, Supervisor of Pensions and Benefits, Department of Finance, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NF, A1B 4J6; Tel: (709) 729-5198, (709) 729-3931.

Another difficulty which has arisen in the past is that of substitute teachers not receiving pay for previous time taught in a reasonable period of time. In certain cases, this has been due to the fact of a change in address. If a substitute teacher is having problems receiving payment for previous time taught, they are encouraged to check with the Payroll Division to determine the address currently on file. Enquiries to the Payroll Division can be made to Ms. Linda Dooling at (709)729-0343.

The Association over the past few years, has had several enquiries from substitute teachers regarding the provisions of their pension plan. Any member wishing information regarding the GMPP should contact Perry Downey in the Benefits and Economic Services Division by calling 1-800-563-3599 or (709)726-3223 or by calling Canada Trust at 1-800-668-2648.

# HIRING OF SUBSTITUTES

by Perry Downey

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Inquiries often arise as to the procedures for the hiring of substitute teachers in the Province and the Association's position on same. In accordance with the Collective Agreements, the conditions governing the hiring of substitute teachers are similar to those for the hiring of teachers for permanent or replacement contracts. These provisions are contained within Article 6 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Article 43 in Labrador West). Clause 6.03 gives the School Board, or any individual acting on behalf of the School Board (eg. a school principal or vice-principal), very wide discretion in the hiring of teachers, and states as follows: "The basic criteria for the selection of teachers shall be competence, suitability and qualifications as assessed by the School Board".

In essence then, the School Board can exercise its discretion during the hiring process in assessing the competence, suitability and qualifications of applicants. This discretion must be exercised within the other parameters of Article 6 (Employment of Teachers) and the recall and reassignment rights of teachers under Article 9 (Layoffs).

At the point of hiring a substitute teacher, a School Board may wish to give particular consideration to such aspects of a teacher's capability as years of university training, length of teaching experience, length of experience with that particular School Board, prior teaching in that particular school or previous experience teaching that particular grade level or subject combination. However, the Board is not obliged to give greater weight to either one of these or any other particular criteria, since Clause 6.03 contains the words "as assessed by the School Board". Thus, one School Board may indeed place greater emphasis on some particular aspect of a person's overall capability than another would.

As a result of concerns with the lack of consistent policies and procedures for the hiring of substitute teachers, an ad hoc Committee on Substitute Teachers was established by NLTA in the fall of 1992 to examine and make recommendations on this subject. The Committee reported to AGM 1993 and that AGM referred the report and its recommendations to the Provincial Executive for consideration and actioning. The recommendations were approved by the Provincial Executive and AGM 1994 and are now an integral part of the NLTA's Policy on Substitute Teachers.

The Association's Policy on the hiring of substitute teachers states as follows:

- a) That substitute and replacement teachers be recognized as defined in Article 42 f) and 42 j), and in accordance with Article 49.08, of the Provincial Collective Agreement.
- b) Subject to Article 9.10(a) of the Provincial Collective Agreement, preference in the hiring of persons for substitute and replacement positions shall be given to individuals who have served in substitute and or replacement positions with the employing School Board.
- c) (i) Subject to (b) above, and the requirement of capability, hiring of substitute and replacement teachers shall be on the basis of accumulated seniority in a substitute or replacement position in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador; (ii) Teachers who have been laid off and are still unemployed in a full-time position shall have service accumulated in any continuing position included in the calculation of seniority as a substitute or replacement teacher.
- d) Capability shall be recognized and determined on the basis of the overall ability of the candidate to perform the job function required.
- e) A substitute/replacement teacher list shall be compiled on a district wide basis comprising candidates approved by the superintendent or designate, subject to the candidates' holding a valid teaching certificate.
- f) A school list of substitute and replacement candidates shall be a sub-set of the district list and shall contain names of teachers who have indicated a particular desire to be considered for call-in to a given

school or schools.

g) A substitute/replacement teacher whose name appears on the school list shall remain on that list for that school as long as the teacher indicates a desire to continue substituting/replacing at that school. Removal of a substitute's name from the list by the School Board may be undertaken only for just cause and shall be subject to the grievance and arbitration process.

h) Subject to Article 9.10(a) of the Provincial Collective Agreement, and the requirements of capability and seniority, a teacher who has been hired on a substitute or replacement basis at a specific school shall be given preference for hire for substitute and replacement positions at that same school over a candidate who has no previous experience at that school.

i) A substitute teacher will be provided when any teacher is away from his/her regular place of employment for any period during the school day.

It is the position of NLTA that this policy outlines a fair and objective process for the hiring of substitute and replacement teachers. Even though this policy has not been negotiated into the Provincial Collective Agreement in its entirety, efforts have continued to implement improvements when and where possible.

Another question often associated with the hiring of substitute teachers is: Who is deemed to be a qualified substitute? Clauses 6.06, 6.07 and 6.11 of the Provincial Collective Agreement address this issue:

6.06: Except where a teacher is awarded at least a Grade II teaching certificate under the Teacher Education Program for Labrador, where competence and suitability of applicants, as assessed by the School Board, are comparable, preference in hiring shall be given to teachers holding Certificate IV or Permit IV or higher.

6.07: Notwithstanding Clause 6.06 and subject to Clauses 6.02, 6.09, 6.10 and 6.11, the School Board agree that they will not hire any teacher who does not hold a Certificate III or Permit III or higher.

6.11: A School Board which has been unable to hire a substitute, replacement, or term contract teacher in accordance with the provisions of this Article may employ a teacher with less than a Certificate III or Permit III as a substitute, replacement or term contract teacher with a written consent of the Minister of Education.

Therefore, substitute teachers holding less than Certificate III are classified as emergency supply and would be hired only when and where a School Board is unable to hire a substitute teacher holding a Certificate III or higher who is capable of filling the position. There may be, however, some very rare occasions where an emergency supply teacher is contracted while a more qualified substitute remains at home. These situations should be very minimal, given the number of qualified substitutes throughout most regions of the province.

If you have any questions regarding any of the above or have concerns which pertain to substitute teachers, please contact [Perry Downey](#), Administrative Officer in the Benefits & Economic Services Division by calling 709-726-3223, ext. 226 or 1-800-563-3599 (toll free in province).

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# THINKING ABOUT RETIREMENT?

by Don Ash

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Over 400 of our teachers are looking forward to retirement in June, and some 1,000 teachers considering retirement over the next few years. The following checklist was designed to assist teachers as they anticipate and plan for this upcoming life phase change.

## Checklist for Retiring Teachers

- Apply to attend Pre-Retirement Seminar up to two years prior to year of retirement.
- Confirm the eligible date of retirement with Teachers' Pension Division (do not resign until eligibility has been confirmed).
- Apply for Teachers' Pension by completing the appropriate Teachers' Pension application.
- Submit resignation to School Board: one month notice if retirement is to occur before Christmas, and: three months notice if retirement is to occur after Christmas.
- Apply for Severance Pay by completing the Severance Payment Request form from Teacher Payroll.
- Confirm/consult with [Johnson Incorporated](#) on [Group Insurance](#) coverage. Remember that Basic Life coverage will decrease to twice annual pension upon retirement. This can be supplemented with Voluntary Life Insurance.
- Consider joining the Retired Teachers' Association by completing the application form and submitting to Teachers' Pensions Division.
- Consider seeking personal financial advice regarding financial decisions related to retirement.
- Keep your mind active and your body healthy. Enjoy life!

Please note the following changes effective upon retirement.

- NLTA Membership status changes from Active Membership to Life or Associate Membership.
- Access to the services and benefits of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) terminates.
- Basic Life coverage reduces to twice annual pension from twice annual salary (provided coverage is maintained and premiums paid).
- Eligibility for EI ceases (unless a person becomes a "re-established worker").

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[Don Ash](#) was on contract as Administrative Officer in Benefits and Economic Services from September 1998 to February 1999. He has since returned to his teaching position at Holy Spirit High School in Manuels.

# GROUP INSURANCE

by Barbara Lewis

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At their most recent meeting in February, the Group Insurance Trustees received the financial statement from the underwriter, Manulife Financial, for the Life, Health and Dental plans for the period ending August 31, 1998. Up to that date, all three options incurred accumulated deficits. Those deficits are:

For Life: \$734,206

For Health: \$357,388

For Dental: \$694,720

Teachers will remember that in 1998, based on the projection of deficits, increases in premiums for all three options were necessary. The figures given above are the accumulation of deficits over several years. For the one year period September 1, 1997 to August 31, 1998, the deficits incurred were as follows:

For Life: \$166,466

For Health: \$731,713

For Dental: \$402, 110

The actual deficit in Health was reduced by the required payment out of the rate stabilization fund held for that purpose.

As for the current financial year, September 1, 1998 to August 31, 1999, a five month financial picture shows the following:

**For Life:** Already there is a substantial deficit. There have been a very high number of teacher deaths during that period.

**For Health and Dental:** The data shows that up to the end of January, both plans are at a "break even" point. From past experience, we know there are months ahead in the remaining seven when the Health and Dental costs will most probably rise. It is too early at this stage to predict whether or not there will be deficits in both Health and Dental.

The underwriter has been directed to do a projected cost analysis for all three options into the next financial year September 1, 1999 to August 31, 2000. Whether there will be increases required in the premiums will be determined at a later date, once additional months of financial experience have been received beyond the current five months received to date. Teachers will be informed of further financial trends and projections before the end of the school year.

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Teachers' Health Assistance Program

# INTRODUCING THAP

by Barbara Lewis

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The [Benefits and Economic Services Division](#) has begun a new service to teachers in our ongoing efforts to respond to their needs. That service is the Teachers' Health Assistance Program (THAP).

## **Rationale for THAP**

Too often, in the past, the staff in the Benefits and Economic Services Division have had phone calls and personal visits to the office from teachers who are about to run out of paid sick leave, sometimes from those with less than one week of sick leave remaining. Many teachers in such circumstances have no idea where to turn and what services and benefits are available to them in the post-paid sick leave period. Some teachers have been left without income for a period of time while the applications for other benefits are being processed. This has caused financial difficulty as well as considerable stress for the teachers concerned.

## **How Does THAP Work?**

Commencing in March 1999, all teachers with less than sixty (60) days of sick leave remaining and who have not been in touch with staff at this office or at the offices of [Johnson Incorporated](#), will receive an individual information package mailed to their home addresses. This package contains an outline of the benefits and services available to them as NLTA members after the expiry of sick leave. The purpose of this mailout is to alert such teachers, well in advance, that they should look at all of the options available to them while still in receipt of salary.

Barbara Lewis in the Benefits and Economic Services Division will be the Administrative Officer coordinating this new program. She will assist teachers with processing the paperwork for post sick leave benefits and provide advice on other services which may be available to them. Barbara can be reached at extension 231.

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When a Colleague is Unwell

# HELPING OUT

by Claudette Coombs

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We may all have had the experience of trying to decide what to do when a colleague becomes ill. How do we help? How do we respect privacy and still show our concern? To be of genuine help to a colleague we must be prepared to confirm the need and explore the appropriate use of our time, talents and motivation since helping out isn't always convenient and doesn't always take the form we want to give!

## **What stops us?**

Too often our good intentions remain just that --; intentions without action. It is not the lack of desire that holds us back, nor is it inadequate commitment. Rather, it may be any combination of personal factors.

A fear that we might say or do the "wrong" thing sometimes freezes us into inaction. We would prefer not making contact at all. To counter this very real fear we don't have to look past our own experiences. Take a minute to remember how comforting it felt to have a colleague or friend acknowledge a personal pain. No, they could not take away the pain nor change the circumstances but their contact showed that they cared and that made a difference in how we felt.

There are also times when confronting the health issues of a colleague may cause us to reflect on concerns about our own health, or that of a family member. Even if we are not yet ready to deal with that, we can accept that spending time with the colleague may better prepare us to face personal trials. Using a little creativity, we can find ways to help which do not infringe upon our private thoughts.

Daily we encounter stories of sadness or tragedy. We relate to the misfortune of others and are grateful for our blessings. We feel compelled by a sense of compassion to do something, yet, we question: "What gives me the right to impose myself on someone?" Think again. Is there something you can do to make the burden lighter? Could your expression of compassion be felt and understood by someone in need? If you answer yes to either of these, don't rob others of your kindness.

We may withhold our emotional support because we are unsure of how we will react. Seeing a colleague's inescapable pain leaves us feeling uncomfortable, helpless and out of control. We may even hold ourselves responsible for not being able to make things better. This personal sensitivity sometimes causes us to avoid making contact if we believe that we have nothing to offer. It is important for us to relinquish the role of problem-solver. Often a colleague merely wants recognition from us, not a solution.

Moving beyond thought and into action can be accomplished, in part by knowing ... knowing what will help; knowing what is expected of us; knowing what to expect from our colleague; and, knowing that our involvement can make a difference.

## **Where do we start?**

The first priority is to consider what the colleague wants and needs. We each have something to offer and, fortunately, we each have special talents despite our personal fears. Successfully matching our "gifts" with our colleague's needs doesn't have to be a difficult process if we do some groundwork first. Ensuring the proper match creates an atmosphere where we are truly helping a friend and we feel good about it. For those of us who are less comfortable making individual contact, we can occasionally plan and act in a group. Whatever our hesitancy, it shouldn't prevent us from doing what our hearts tell us is important to do.

We can offer to help at different levels but we must be sensitive to other influences if assistance is not

readily accepted. Let's start with the basics, if a colleague is in great (temporary) physical distress, he/she may not be interested in sitting up and casually chatting. However, if physical distress is severe and long-term, a period of distraction might be greatly appreciated.

Although physical needs must be considered before others, all needs should be addressed in turn.

### **What is needed?**

Considering the varying needs of our unwell colleague, we identify areas where we can use personal talents and abilities to help. We may not be the greatest conversationalist but we may make great muffins or enjoy driving or running errands. If we look closely we are sure to find an area where our ability matches a need.

**PHYSICAL.** The easiest needs to meet are generally the practical, physical needs. The ill person may be preoccupied and unable to focus if physical comfort, personal hygiene, meal preparation, housework, or bill paying are not met. Staff can plan a rotating list to deliver meals. They could also arrange outings for the teacher's young children or take responsibility for being the "taxi service". One teacher expressed admiration and wonder for school friends who used their "casual day" funds to pay for house cleaning services each week. Another teacher felt very special and close to each staff member when the staff brought a large basket filled with a variety of treats and home-made goodies. Everyone contributed without being intrusive. Students often feel the same desire for involvement and can also be part of these initiatives.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL.** This area usually causes us the most personal turmoil. We want to bring cheer and hope but sometimes face a bleak reality. We then emphasize daily progress and mastery of daily routines. Each of us must feel secure in our place within society --; as a teacher, parent, partner, friend, or any other role which we fill. We are reassured of our continued value and contribution when we are called upon to function in one of our roles. One teacher felt grateful when she was requested to provide a critique of a new program to be introduced. She was able to complete the task over a period of time and share her wealth of experience and expertise.

**SOCIAL.** Being connected is extremely important. We need to feel accepted, significant to others, and most of all, not forgotten. Illness often brings a sense of isolation. Making brief, regular contacts by phone, e-mail or staff visits can facilitate social contact that might otherwise be neglected or sporadic.

**PROFESSIONAL.** After years of training and much time and energy, we want to maintain our personal image as teachers. Being removed from the classroom for any length of time can adversely affect us. Separation gives a sense of being disconnected and, maybe even, dispensable. News of school activities, visits to the classroom or mail can reaffirm the colleague's place in school life.

**SELF.** Respect and admiration are valued characteristics in our lives. In the past the teacher has functioned as a meaningful member of a team: offering advice; providing direction; and supporting colleagues. That doesn't have to end. There will be days when the colleague would still enjoy that role. You can give him/her the opportunity.

### **Cautions**

In a prolonged or unpredictable illness, emotions run high. Allow yourself to express feelings while still remaining positive and hopeful. Showing emotion should not be equated with negativity or hopelessness. Instead, it is a revelation of the colleague's value to you.

It is necessary to be attentive to the colleague's current physical condition and emotional status. There may be times when a personal visit is "just what is needed" while at other times, the colleague cannot cope with such an interaction. Don't give up. The best way to determine whether or not a specific act is suitable today, is to ask! Even if things have been planned, it may be wise to call ahead to confirm that the plans are still convenient.

In conclusion, we all benefit if we don't hide our talents but instead let them shine and bring joy to the giver and receiver.

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[Claudette Coombs](#) is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 265), or [Kathy Burford](#) (ext. 242).

## CHARACTER EDUCATION

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St. Francis High School in Harbour Grace has introduced a new program that is the first of its kind in the province. "At the end of last year, we looked at the Department of Education's Essential Outcomes for Education and felt that we were covering all of them, but that we needed to put a little more emphasis on the Personal Development section, a very important section that is often left aside," says teacher and Program Coordinator, Mr. Ed Jarvis. "St. Francis has always had a long tradition of Student Leadership Programming and with the full support of the school's administration, Mr. Jack Rose and Mrs. Eileen Furlong, we decided to move forward and develop a Character Education/Student Leadership Program that would be reflective of the province's new education system." Character Education is a relatively new philosophy of education that is growing by leaps and bounds in the public schools in the United States, and St. Francis is the first school in Newfoundland to introduce such a program.

Character Education is basically the teaching of the "forth and fifth R's of education: respect and responsibility" from a non-religious, non-denominational point of view. "Young people today live in a very difficult time and this program provides them with the necessary life skills to function as contributing citizens of our society, both for today and the rest of their lives," Jarvis goes on to say. The school has adopted the name C.A.R.D. (Concerned Adolescents Reaching Everyone) as the name of the Character Education Student Team. The school is hoping to have a local Character Education Course available by the fall of 1999. One of the most important aspects of the school's program is the Student Leadership section which the school is hoping to share with the other schools in the Avalon West School District.

Teenagers sometimes get a lot of negative publicity for the things they do on the weekends; however, during the weekend of November 6 to 8 at St. Francis, there was nothing but pure positive energy from 125 teenagers. During that weekend, the Harbour Grace school extended its popular and growing Character Education/Student Leadership Program to other high schools in the Avalon West School District. "We wanted to share the benefits that we have received from the program with other schools in the district," says Ed Jarvis, weekend coordinator. "In the past several months our program has been presented to District Office and with the full support of the Programming Department, we felt that we could make this weekend an astounding success. To say the weekend was successful would be an understatement," Mr. Jarvis goes on to say. "It was probably the best Student Leadership Conference we have ever put off! The high energy and learning in a fun, non-threatening environment was both satisfying and encouraging to see!"

The particular aspect of the school's Character Education/Student Leadership Program that took place that weekend is called S.H.O.U.T. (Students Helping Others Unite Together). While not unique to St. Francis, S.H.O.U.T. has become synonymous with the school. "S.H.O.U.T. has been around for about eight years," says Mr. Jarvis. "And in that time we have had two to three thousand students participate. Earlier this year, in wake of the new revised school restructuring, we revisited the program and feel that we have made the necessary changes to make it stronger than ever!" This year the steering committee of S.H.O.U.T., the Student Leadership team at St. Francis with the support of the Avalon West School District are looking at making the program a mainstay of the school's Character Education Program.

S.H.O.U.T. is basically coordinated by Ed Jarvis, Chris Pickard of Y-Youth Enterprises in St. John's, Chris Corbett C.S.U., V.P. Academic at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and Corey Lynch, with a very well trained and competent facilitating team made up mostly of University, College and Senior High School students. It incorporates five main aspects into its weekend: Trust, Communication, Gifts and Talents, Decision Making, and Action, and helps young people to search within themselves to develop leadership skills as contributing citizens of today and for the future. "While the weekend was highly energized and full of fun and games, the students really did learn something," says Mr. Jarvis. Chris Corbett reiterates the

point. "When we carry out our annual student orientation at MUN, we look to people who have gone through such a program to help. I've seen so many people go through S.H.O.U.T. at the university who make significant contributions to the various student organizations we have on campus that it speaks volumes for the program," says Mr. Corbett.

The program coordinators were also extremely pleased and excited to see how many schools from the Avalon West School District took advantage of the weekend. Thirteen of the 16 high schools within the board participated with the hope that the other schools will come on stream next time. The following schools sent at least a couple of representatives: Laval High School, Whitbourne High, St. Georges, Holy Trinity (Normans Cove and Heart's Content), E.J. Pratt, Carbonear Collegiate, Ascension Collegiate, Bishop O'Neil, Roncalli, St. Catherine's, Dunne Memorial and St. Francis. St. Kevin's in the Goulds, a long time S.H.O.U.T. supporter, also participated.

"We really would like to thank Mrs. Mary Tucker, Director of Programming at District Office, for her support of this initiative we are undertaking at the school," says Mr. Jarvis. "Without this support we could not have dreamed of so many schools taking part." The Avalon West District in conjunction with St. Francis is the first school district in the province to take on and actively promote Character Education/Student Leadership Programming.

The St. Francis team and S.H.O.U.T. Leadership will be sponsoring another Leadership Conference in the new year and S.H.O.U.T.'s coordinating team reminds all those who participated in the conference to "Live what you learn!" Anyone wanting any information on either the Character Education or Student Leadership Program at the school are asked to contact the school at 709-596-3452 or 709-596-2154 and ask for Mr. Jack Rose or Mr. Ed Jarvis.

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The Newfoundland Herald's

# TEACHER OF THE YEAR

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Jenine Dawson of St. Francis of Assisi School in Outer Cove has been selected as The Newfoundland Herald's Teacher of the Year.

Jenine graduated from Memorial University in 1978 and is scheduled to complete her masters degree at Mount St. Vincent University this summer. She began teaching at St. Francis of Assisi School in 1994 and became the Special Education teacher.

The nomination for Teacher of the Year was sent to The Newfoundland Herald by Patricia Power, a parent of a student of St. Francis of Assisi. Her son, Jonathan, has been taught by Jenine Dawson since Grade 2. He is now in Grade 7.

The nomination letter, written by Patricia Power, states, "Ms. Dawson has given Jonathan the support that he needed by helping him find new strategies, ways of coping, familiarizing him with well-known actors and politicians who have the same disabilities and also by preparing him for his return into the regular classroom. I am pleased to say that because of the work that Ms. Dawson has done with Jonathan that his last report card showed all A's."

Jenine Dawson, another example of excellence in teaching. Congratulations.

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(Details for this article were taken from the February 27-March 5 issue of The Newfoundland Herald.)

# EDUCATION TODAY

by Kevin Dobbin

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The changing face of education is going to impact the very roots by which education is assimilated. The buzz word today is reform, but reform will only show how much is lacking in our education system. It will actually downgrade our present system because planning is not looking at the whole picture of education. There are too many assumptions made and too many not listening. Reform is a necessary part of education. Education must change with the changing needs of the environment in which our students find themselves. This means courses of studies that are relevant to the fast paced environment students find themselves experiencing. New programs must have a relevance to the world around them. These courses must capture their interest and make them see why it is necessary to complete these studies.

The educational system is missing the full meaning of educational reform because the hidden view usually means bigger is better. Which leads to the idea that duplication must be avoided and the management level of education must be reduced. This is evident with the reduction in the number of boards. These boards are huge and take in vast areas of the province. It is interesting to note that all boards were given an equal number of employees regardless of the number of students and schools in a particular district. This leads to a reduction in the management positions in the educational system. These people were hired because of the expertise they had. This basically is reducing the experts in the educational system. These managers remaining must add to their workload to replace those left out in the shuffle.

To further complicate things, all boards were given the same number of employees (experts). If you think for a while, it should come to you that a big board should have more people to run the various aspects of their mandate. For example, the Avalon East School Board has the same number of people running the board as the smallest board in the province. The point is this --; Avalon East has one third of the total pupil population in Newfoundland and Labrador and it is still given the same number of employees as the smaller boards. The pressure must be overwhelming. Look for the people retiring from the board level in the near future. The message is clear --; few to do the work of many. If this attitude permeates down to the schools, you can see how education will be downgraded. If this mentality is carried over into the schools, the jobs of teaching will take on a whole new view. More time will be needed by teachers to prepare classes and deal with a whole new set of rules and guidelines brought on by reform.

The new programs for the Atlantic region will be starting soon in high schools and this will require a tremendous amount of time to organize and set up for the classroom student. The introduction of these courses to the teachers will cause many problems. Remember the school board and the shortage of personnel, well these are the people who must prepare the teachers for these new courses. Many times teachers are given courses and no text to go with them. I heard recently that a teacher was into his third or fourth month of a course before he got a textbook with guidelines for the course. It was not until April or May before a workshop was given on the course. The workshop lasts one or two days and then you are on your own.

Teachers should be given extra time to become familiar with all new programs. The length of time would be more than ten hours. Maybe the employers could set up programs with incentives for the teachers during the summer vacation time. This will make for a more educated teacher who will be better able to deal with the new course coming into the system now and in future years. This upgrading should not cost teachers because it is a part of their job and should be covered by their employer. This is the way it is done in most government departments and businesses --; why not for education.

This hints at problems for classroom teachers. New courses require huge amounts of time to prepare and to

evaluate. Most teachers have six to eight courses to prepare each night. There is one preparation period given in high school. This comes out to ten preparation periods in a 14-day cycle which is just not enough time given in school to prepare lessons or to correct quizzes and tests. In addition, this does not allow adequate time to make phone calls to parents, interview students, run off tests, collect material and equipment for the next class. Most teachers are working at home during the night. Ninety-eight percent of all teachers spend two to three hours more a night catching up on work they take home from school.

The reform classroom might consist of 25 students but within that one class there may be students on different pathways. There are five pathways proposed in the new system. Pathways are basically a system whereby students are placed into a subject based on their ability to do the course work. So you have students who can't cover the subject content. Each of these students who can't cover the subject content must have an individual program developed by a team of teachers who are teaching this student. This team consists of parents, a special needs teacher, guidance councillor, teachers of various subjects and a board representative. These teachers must assess the individual student and write up an individual program of studies for this student. Time required could be from three to 25 one to two hour sessions or more depending on a number of variables. This meeting will take place outside the regular school teaching day. So any child in a classroom with special needs must have a separate and individualized course set up before you start teaching. A teacher with 25 students could conceivably prepare five to ten or more lesson plans for one class. On top of this, a teacher is supposed to provide for individual instruction during class time. To do a good lesson plan requires time in the range of 30 to 60 minutes. If it takes 30 minutes, then it would mean approximately two to three hours of preparation to meet the needs of some of the students in the class. Most teachers have five classes a day in which lesson plans are necessary. Added to this is the time teachers are expected to correct tests and quizzes and assignments which in itself takes up considerable time. Teachers are also expected to supervise students during morning, recess and lunch time and participate in after school activities which may take weekends away from their families.

One of the main points of this essay are teacher activities both inside and outside the classroom cannot be accomplished unless more teachers and resources are provided.

The main points of this essay are to show how reform is downloaded to administrators who in return download it onto the classroom teacher. Reform in a hectic environment where time is limited can only lead to chaos. The people who will pay the price will be teachers who must implement this reform at all costs to themselves.

Reform is going ahead and the system is trying to catch up. Should it be the other way around?

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Kevin Dobbin is a teacher at Mobile Central High School.

# STUDENT ASSISTANTS

by Belanger Memorial School Team

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The following information is the reaction of the Special Education and Challenging Needs Teachers and Administration of Belanger Memorial School to the new student profile for student assistant allocations developed by the Department of Education.

We have addressed this response to the Minister of Education and forwarded a copy to our district staff, local MHA, NLTA, and all special service coordinators in the province. As the information outlines, we have grave concerns about the current method of allocating student assistants as it does not address the existing need. We strongly urge that you take the time to review our thoughts on the issue and give some consideration to forwarding your views on this issue to the appropriate decision makers. Our only hope of a resolution is province-wide pressure from as many sources as possible. We must start speaking out for the sake of the students we serve.

February 2, 1999

Dear Hon. Min. Judy Foote:

Recently, in-service was provided by a consultant from the Department of Education on the new profiles for student assistant allocations as developed by the Student Assistant Allocation Process Review Committee. As front-line workers who are tasked with the responsibility of actioning this process, we have some serious concerns.

First of all, from a broader perspective we are extremely disappointed that this committee limited its discussions to time lines, the profile form and a recommendation that the ISSP team, (more specifically the student and parents), be involved in the filling out of the form and signing it. These actions may well facilitate the whole process but they do little to address the deeper issues surrounding student assistant allocations.

## **1. Key Criteria Missing**

Many of our students who require the services of an assistant in order to fully function physically and academically within the school setting will not qualify under the criteria as outlined in the profile. For example,

a) there is no category for students who have a life-threatening medical condition which requires full-time one-on-one monitoring and immediate response to medical needs/an emergency. We have such a student in our school and she is neither physically nor cognitively disabled.

b) under cognitive delay there must be a category "has severe academic limitations and requires one-on-one assistance to function academically". The Department of Education currently advocates a policy of integration for challenged and core special education students. In many situations in our schools there is a ratio of one teacher per four students, with these students spanning many grade levels. In addition, many of these students are globally challenged. With current restrictions it is an impossible task to action the Department's own integration policy. Many of these students simply cannot function academically in a regular classroom of 25 or so students. With the challenging needs/teacher responsible for other students, it is physically impossible for him/her to provide the support in the various classrooms. Somehow the formula must recognize this reality.

c) under the category of severe behavior disorder, there must be a category of "behavior interferes with academic functioning of self and others". The current criteria in no way, shape or form reflects the reality of the school setting in dealing with behavior problems. Tantrums, screaming, inability to attend (ADD and ADHD), constant interruptions/disruptions (blurting out, unable to remain seated, etc.), social/emotional limitations are only some of the daily realities. Political pressure and dissatisfaction from both parents of the children requiring student assistant services and parents whose students are being negatively impacted upon are the norm for schools.

d) many of our core special education/challenging needs students who are on an alternate curriculum require a work study program in order to fully implement all components of their program. Many potential employers will not accept a student unless there is an adult supervisor with them. Since the special education teacher is responsible for more than one student, it is physically impossible for him/her to provide this supervision. Either the student assistant allocation has to meet this need or some incentive needs to be provided for employers so they would be more receptive to providing this service to our youth.

## **2. The Physical Realities of Individual Schools**

The current allocation does not acknowledge the age/grade span of the students. On paper it may seem practical that two adults per four students can provide for all their needs. However, when you factor into the equation that one may be a primary child while the other is a senior high student, the formula is simply not workable. In addition, in our particular situation many of our students are "severely" challenged and are high demand when it comes to service. For example, one of our students requires two adults to change her. (She's globally delayed, blind, self abusive and abusive to others.) The allocation MUST reflect the age/grade levels of the students being serviced and the level/intensity of service required. In addition, most student assistants are allocated for a five hour day. However, when lunch hour, recess, early morning arrival and travel to and from school are factored, most students requiring a student assistant have a school day of six to seven hours.

The inclusion of challenging needs students into our school has been in many ways a very positive move, both for the challenged student and the whole student body. However, once the Department of Education accepted these students as our responsibility, we also accepted the responsibility of providing the best possible program, one which fosters each child's development and maximizes his/her potential to function independently. We have worked diligently in this regard. However, with the increasing demands in the number of students and the level of need each presents, we are becoming increasingly frustrated and often feel that our hands are tied in trying to do what we know is best for these students. We simply cannot do it without the necessary personnel resources.

We strongly urge that you give due consideration to the above and work toward establishing the necessary criteria which will truly reflect the realities of classrooms in delivering programs to these students. They deserve no less from us.

Sincerely,

Bonnie MacIsaac  
Principal for Belanger Memorial School Team  
(Special Education and Challenging Needs Teachers and Administration)

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# RESOURCES

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## **Mose Morgan: A Life in Action**

Released to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Memorial University, Cyril Poole's, *Mose Morgan: A Life in Action*, is a well-written and carefully researched biography of Mose, the man. The author draws extensively on Mose's surviving associates, historical sources, the Morgan family, and his own impressions as a long-time friend and colleague.

While *A Life in Action* touches on the highlights of Mose's career, it focuses more explicitly on the question of "what made Mose tick" --; what was it that spurred this unquestionably exceptional man through a lifetime of unparalleled achievement. Author Poole finds that much of Mose's drive came from the remarkable outport family into which he was born. In later years Morgan's perception of Memorial as a unique institute of higher education, tailored to the needs of rural Newfoundland, guided his every move. Poole writes that "Mose's career as such is not the subject of this biography. [His achievements] are backdrops against which to illuminate an elusive mind and character."

*Mose Morgan: A Life in Action* was researched and published with the assistance of the Johnson Family Foundation.

The regular price of the book is \$24.95 plus tax and handling. If you order a copy using the coupon below, your price will be \$25.00 all-inclusive.

## **Brigus: Past Glory, Present Splendour**

*Brigus: Past Glory, Present Splendour*, by John Northway Leamon, is the most detailed and most informed Newfoundland community history to have been published to date. The bulk of the book consists of a series of walking tours around the historic town, cast as a dialogue between the author and his grandson.

John N. Leamon is the perfect guide to take you around historic Brigus. Certainly he is well supplied with a local's anecdotes concerning the ancient outport in its Past Glory. But Leamon also brings to the task a lifetime devoted to preserving Brigus's Present Splendour, and to presenting the home of his heart to visitors from around the world.

*Brigus: Past Glory, Present Splendour* contains ten detailed tours about Brigus and its environs, many evocative historic photographs, and a history of the town's religious, educational and social institutions. A further feature of interest is a transcription of an old Leamon family possession: a voter's list from 1835 that covers the area from Topsail to Bay Roberts.

The book was published with the assistance of the Cultural Affairs division of the Department of Tourism and Culture, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **Arctic Travel Guide Commemorates Canada's New Territory**

The *Nunavut Handbook*, 1999 Commemorative Edition, is the most complete and authoritative guidebook to Canada's Arctic. It was launched two months before Nunavut officially becomes Canada's newest territory on April 1, 1999. The Handbook contains updated information on Nunavut, and documents and celebrates the creation of Canada's newest territory. Written by over 50 largely Nunavut-based writers, the 454 page guide contains 100 information filled chapters, accommodations, transportation, outfitters, exotic attractions and more. The guide also lists things to do while in Nunavut and information about the Inuit, whose ancestors and earlier northern inhabitants occupied this land for millennia including chapters on Inuit

spirituality, traditional Inuit games, and more. The Nunavut Handbook is published by Nortext Multimedia Inc., an Iquluit-based marketing and publishing firm. It is available in most bookstores for \$29.95.

### **Peace What Peace: Confronting Central America's New Economic War**

The Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA) has produced a video and study guide entitled Peace What Peace: Confronting Central America's New Economic War. The video explores how the hardships that led to war in Central America have escalated, not diminished, since the end of civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. It is a valuable tool for any educator embarking on explaining how trade liberalization policies are directly linked to human rights in this new era of globalization. The Study Guide provides convenient teaching suggestions and pertinent background information. For further information contact Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America, 129 St. Clair Avenue W., Toronto, ON, M4V 1N5, Tel: 416-921-0801; Fax: 416-921-3843; e-mail: [icchrla@web.net](mailto:icchrla@web.net).

### **Call for Grant Applications**

Applications are invited from interested individuals or groups for an award or awards to be made to Geoscience Education Projects in Newfoundland and Labrador. A maximum of \$1,000 will be awarded to one or more deserving projects in this competition. Projects should emphasize Earth Science, in the broad sense of the word, and should be beneficial to the professional development of the Newfoundland and Labrador geoscience community. They should also be open to participation by a significant segment of that community. Examples include funding of visiting speakers, field trips (normally to be held within the province), technical workshops, and activities related to the development of Earth Sciences skills at the secondary education level. Application forms and further information can be obtained from: Bryan Greene, Chair, St. John's 1988 Trust Fund Committee, 4 O'Regan Place, St. John's, NF, A1A 2B2, Fax: 709-729-4491 (Attn: Baxter Kean); e-mail: [brgreene@avint.net](mailto:brgreene@avint.net). Applications must be received by April 15, 1999. Decisions will be made by April 30, 1999. Projects must be completed between September 1, 1999 and August 31, 2000.

### **New Releases from Whitecap Books**

All About Me is a keepsake journal for seven to ten year old kids. For many children one of the hardest things about journals is deciding what to write about. With this in mind, author Linda Kranz has provided thought-provoking questions that help kids learn more about themselves. All About Me is a fun and revealing way to express thoughts, ideas and emotions. It has colour illustrations throughout and is available for \$14.95 soft cover.

Through My Eyes: A Journal for Teens is a great time capsule for teens with its pages to record ideas, thoughts and dreams. The journal is to help teens focus on "how" they want to be as well as what they want to be. Also written by Linda Kranz, Through My Eyes invites youth to think about their inner qualities as well as more tangible dreams. It is available for \$16.95 soft cover.

For further information on these or other publications of Whitecap Books, contact Angela Roberge, 351 Lynn Avenue, North Vancouver, BC, V7J 2C4, Tel: 604-980-9852, ext. 232; Fax: 604-980-8197; e-mail: [angelar@pinc.com](mailto:angelar@pinc.com).

### **Cable in the Classroom Launches 1999 Season**

Cable in the Classroom (CITC) is a non-profit, public service initiative by over 60 Canadian cable companies and 38 programming services offering free cable connection and copyright-cleared, commercial-free, educational television programming to Canadian public schools. Providing over 360 hours of quality programming each month, Cable in the Classroom continues to expand its lineup with three outstanding new shows this season.

Endorsed by the Canadian Teachers' Federation and numerous other educational associations across the country, CITC presents enormous possibilities for stimulating the interest and enthusiasm of students. Teachers can review the program schedules on the CITC web site and select programs that fit their curriculum. They can then tape programs at home or at school and use them to enhance the learning experience for their students. Many programs also have lesson plans available to make teaching even easier.

For more information, contact Cable in the Classroom toll-free at 1-800-244-9049 or check out the web site at [www.cablededucation.ca](http://www.cablededucation.ca).

### **A Kid's View of Canada II**

The Royal Bank of Canada, in partnership with the National Film Board (NFB), is offering complimentary copies of A Kid's View of Canada II to school boards across Canada and to more than 300 public libraries. A Kid's View of Canada II (a co-production of Nicolette Saina Productions, NFB and CBC) is a documentary that looks at key issues facing Canada as seen through the eyes of youth. It shows Jordan Schroder travelling from coast to coast, meeting up with old friends and discussing how they and Canada have changed in the five years since the first A Kid's View of Canada was filmed. It offers insights into young people's lives as they leave childhood behind and envision life as adult citizens of Canada. To inquire about ordering copies of A Kid's View of Canada II, contact the NFB at 1-800-267-7710; fax: 514-283-7564; web site: [www.nfb.ca](http://www.nfb.ca)

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# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

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## **Substitute Teachers**

April 15, 1999

Holiday Inn, St. John's, 7:30 p.m. General Meeting: Information session on employment and school board restructuring. Contact: Brian Laing, Tel: 709-745-7224.

## **Newfoundland and Labrador Library Week**

April 25 - May 1, 1999

The goal of Library Week is to make people aware of the tremendous possibilities of libraries and to encourage people to visit and to have fun. This year there will be a province-wide photo contest and a province-wide Kids' Book Choice Awards during Library Week, with winning entries to be published on the Library Week web site at [www.publib.nf.ca](http://www.publib.nf.ca). Library Week is sponsored by the Newfoundland and Labrador Library Association.

## **Technology Education**

April 29 - 30, 1999

Battery Hotel, St. John's. 1999 Annual TESIC Conference and AGM. "Designing the New Millennium".

Contact: Garland Jennings, Tel: 709-579-4107. Additional information may be found at

[www.stemnet.nf.ca/tesic](http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/tesic).

## **REaD**

May 13 -14, 1999

Contact: Brian Vardy, Tel: 579-4100 Ext. 236; e-mail: [bvardy@bishops.ntc.nf.ca](mailto:bvardy@bishops.ntc.nf.ca).

## **School Administrators (in conjunction with CAP)**

May 19 - 21, 1999

St. John's. Contact: George Tucker, Tel: 709-726-3682 or Richard Harvey, Tel: 709-834-2081.

## **Program Specialists**

May 26 - 28, 1999 (tentative)

Gander. Contact: Pat Collins, Tel: 709-786-7182.

## **10th Annual Forum on Physical Activity and Disability**

June 3 - 5, 1999

The Citidel Hotel and Convention Centre, Ottawa. Celebrating a Decade of Success and a Millennium of Opportunity. For further information contact Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability, 1101 Prince of Wales, Suite 230, Ottawa, ON, K2C 3W7, Tel: 613-723-8710 or 1-800-771-0663; Fax: 613-723-1060.

## **Huntsman Marine Science Centre Summer Institutes**

May July/August, 1999

Join us on the sea as we paddle to various islands to assist with research programs during Field Ornithology, July 10-17, 1999; or as we search for creatures great and small during our Marine Science Institute, August 7-14, 1999. For application forms and information contact: Tracey Dean, HMSC Public Education, Brandy Cove Road, St. Andrews, NB, E0G 2X0, Tel: 506-529-1200; Fax: 506-529-1212; e-mail:

[huntsman@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:huntsman@nbnet.nb.ca); web site: [www.unb.ca/web/huntsman](http://www.unb.ca/web/huntsman).

## **Small Schools Institute**

August 9 - 11, 1999

St. Anthony. Contact: Barbara House, Tel: 709-635-2337 (s), 709-634-2205 (h).

## **Small Rural Schools in the Global Community**

August 11 - 15, 1999

St. Anthony. An international symposium on rural education and telelearning featuring keynote speakers and presenters from islands and countries of the North Atlantic Rim. Sponsored by The Centre for TeleLearning

and Rural Education, Faculty of Education, MUN, in partnership with NLTA, the Department of Education, and the Northern Peninsula/Labrador South School District. Contact: René Wicks, Tel: 709-726-3223, Fax: 709-726-4302; e-mail: [rwicks@nlta.nf.ca](mailto:rwicks@nlta.nf.ca).

### **DND Teachers Reunion**

August 13 - 15, 1999

Vancouver. Contact: Liz Gautschi (Cochrane), Tel: 604-731-1367; e-mail: [egautschi@henderson.vsb.bc.ca](mailto:egautschi@henderson.vsb.bc.ca) (during school term) or Tom Bruner, Tel: 604-739-7410. Web site: [www.hello.to/toots99](http://www.hello.to/toots99).

### **Humanities**

October 7 - 8, 1999

St. John's. Contact: Geoffrey Booth, Tel: 709-944-7628.

### **Learning Resources**

October 14 - 16, 1999

Corner Brook. Contact: Kathy Rowsell, Tel: 709-634-6837.

### **Music**

October 15 - 16, 1999

St. John's. Contact: Mary Dinn, Tel: 709-745-1253.

### **Primary**

October 20 - 22, 1999

Gander. Contact: May Keats, Tel: 709-256-7785 (w); 709-679-2162 (h); e-mail: [mkeats@stemnet.nf.ca](mailto:mkeats@stemnet.nf.ca). Ideas on suggestions for presenters would be welcome.

### **CEC National Institute '99 Newfoundland Council for Exceptional Children (in conjunction with NLTA Council of Special Services)**

November 11 - 13, 1999

St. John's. Special Matters Beyond 2000: Newfounde Frontiers. Join us as we explore frontiers in the provision of special services to exceptional children for the year 2000 and beyond. Keynote address: Dr. William Jenson, University of Utah, author of "Tough Kids Tool Box", will present Practical Behaviour Management Strategies. Contact: Dr. Wayne Nesbit (CEC), Tel: 709-737-8606; David Philpott (CEC), Tel: 709-739-7443; or Dr. Ajit Bedi (COSS), Tel: 709-738-4081. (The COSS Conference tentatively scheduled for April 1999 has been cancelled due to their co-sponsorship of this event. This COSS Conference may be held in 2000.)

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**Note: Contact the Professional Development Division at the NLTA for any changes or additions to NLTA Special Interest Council workshops/conferences.**