

T H E
bulletin

Newfoundland and Labrador Teacher's Association

Vol. 41/ No. 2 November 1997

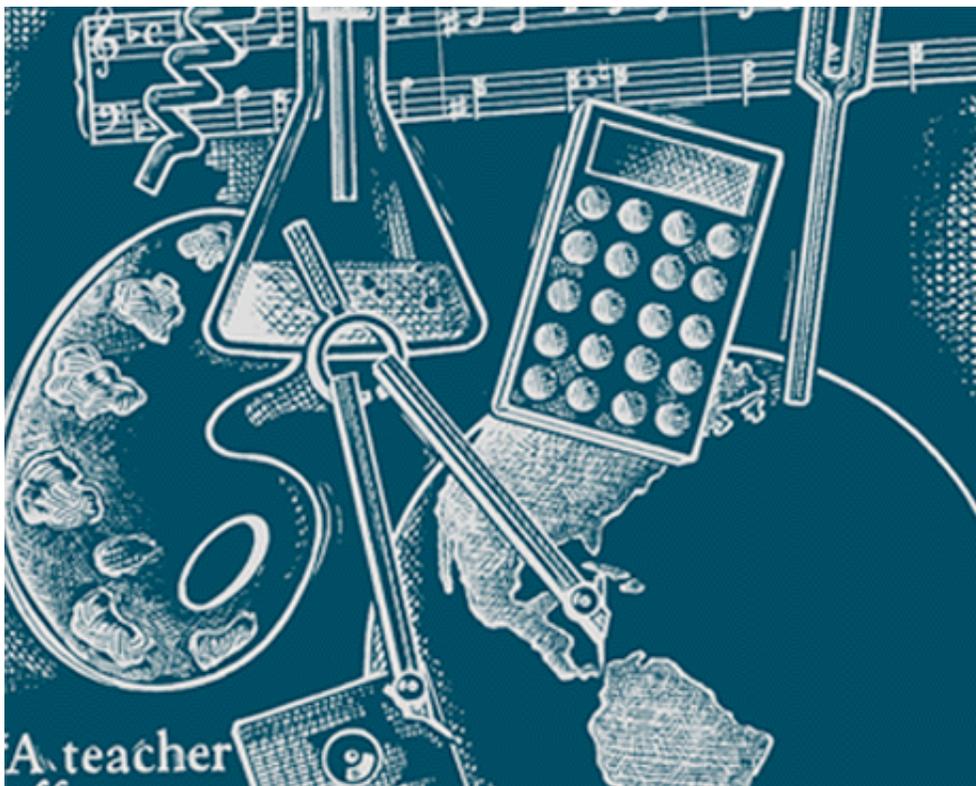




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THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE

by Lesley-Ann Browne

There are many things that I do not fully understand in life but there are two in particular that are a source of mystery to me. One of them is golf and the other is daylight-saving time.

Now for many years I have tried to understand the idea of changing the clocks to save daylight. I have yet to read an explanation that makes complete sense. Sometimes the explanation involves the farmers and the crops and other times it has to do with the positioning of the sun. Now a few years ago it was decided by our government leaders that we would have double daylight-saving time. I recall getting into a debate with people who I considered to be relatively "intelligent" about the reasons for this. The conversation had started with someone remarking about how it was great to have extra daylight. I asked how they figured that there was extra daylight. They said because the clocks had changed and that there was now more daylight. It took quite a long time for them to grasp the fact that there was still the same amount of daylight as there had been before the clocks had changed. Now these people had a difficult time coming to terms with the fact that the only thing that had really changed was the time we go to bed and rise in the morning.

I don't like the idea of the darkness setting in long before I leave work for the day but it does have its advantages. There is little argument when trying to get my daughter to bed. The excuse that it is still light outside is no longer applicable and she will finally get what I consider to be enough sleep.

The days seem shorter but only to those people who keep the same schedule. I adjust my days to the daylight. The peace and solitude of breakfast, watching the sun come up (when you can see it through the fog and drizzle) is a great way to start the day.

Now, to the other mystery. What is it about golf that people, mainly men, find so appealing? Why do they want to follow a small ball, with a small stick, around a large field? My husband enjoys the game and I have had the pleasure of outfitting him with the appropriate equipment/toys. At first it was the golf bag with all the pockets and attachments. Similar, in my opinion, to the purse carried by a bag lady. Then the shoes that don't make much of a statement but really (supposedly) improve the game. And then the wedges, and irons, and a whole lot of other stuff that is necessary for a good game. Last Christmas the gift that got the most attention was a ball retriever. Now I can't say that I knew a lot about what I was buying but I was assured, by an expert, that it was the best. I have to question why I spent all that money on a long stick that retrieves balls. If you know how to play why do you have to get balls out of far off locations? Can't you just walk and get them? Don't golf balls float?

While on holidays last year I had the pleasure of meeting a golf pro. He offered lessons that I did not accept but my husband did play golf with him twice. Upon their return from one long game I was informed that his golf game had improved and he broke 100. Huh! Broke 100 what? I have since taken the time to learn what they were talking about and have actually tried the game. As this golf pro said, the disadvantage of women playing golf is that they find out how long it actually takes to play. Well I found out. I hit and I swung and I retrieved and I missed! As Mark Twain said, "Golf is a long walk spoiled." I will, therefore, leave my husband to the green and take my long walk elsewhere.

Lesley-Ann Browne is Communications Officer with the NLTA

SMUG?

Canadian teachers are sometimes heard to sound rather smug about the quality of education our students receive when compared with that of American students, especially those who attend schools in states that have given education funding a low priority.

Perhaps it's good to be brought up short now and then. While class size continues to increase across Canada, teachers in California led a campaign to draw attention to overcrowded classrooms. As a result, \$771 million (U.S.) was appropriated to reduce the size of all K-3 classrooms to 20 or fewer students.

We should be so lucky --; and so should our students.

(Source: "Size Matters", NEA Today, Vol. 15, No. 2, September 1996, p. 11)

CHRISTMAS CARD CONTEST

1998 Theme

"All I Want For Christmas Is ..."

Open to Grade 5 Students

How to Enter

Entries should be submitted on 8 1/2" x 11" paper, and drawings must be completed in black or red felt marker, or any other medium which will reproduce well. Entries should also include a verse/greeting to be included on the inside of the Christmas card. Only three entries can be accepted per school. Each entry must include the following statement signed by the teacher: "I certify that this is the original work of (insert name), a Grade 5 student, and that it has been completed entirely by the student." Entries will be judged on the basis of their artistic merit, creativity, and ability to produce well. The winning submission will be the NLTA's official Christmas card for 1998.

Prizes

First prize - \$75

Second and third prizes - \$25

Deadline

Entries must be received by December 31, 1997. Please include student name, teacher name, school address and phone number.

Please send entries to:

CHRISTMAS CARD CONTEST
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road,
St. John's, NF, A1B 1W1

NLTA appointments

The Provincial Executive Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is pleased to announce the appointment of Lloyd Hobbs to the position of Administrative Officer, Benefits and Economic Services, and Perry Downey to a six month term position of Administrative Officer, Benefits and Economic Services.

Lloyd has been involved in the teaching profession for 20 years and has held the position of Vice-Principal at Persalvic Elementary School in Victoria since 1987. He was in the replacement position of Principal at the same school in 1987-88 and in 1993. Previous to that he was Vice-Principal at Jackson Walsh High School in Western Bay, and taught at Goose High School in Goose Bay from 1978 to 1981.

He has been an active member of NLTA serving several terms as president of the Carbonear Branch from 1989-1992, and 1995-96, and on the Provincial Executive Council from 1993-1994. He served on the NLTA Finance and Property Committee, the NLTA Staff Negotiations Committee, and the NLTA/Provincial Government Deferred Salary Leave Committee. He has also been a member of the School Administrators' Council.

Lloyd received his Bachelor of Arts (History major) and a Bachelor of Education in 1978, an Educational Diploma in School Resource Services in 1982, a Masters of Education in Educational Administration in 1987, and a certificate in Educational Leadership in 1990. He is presently enrolled in the Masters of Business Administration at the MUN School of Business and has completed courses in such areas as industrial relations, management skills, organizational behaviour, collective bargaining and arbitration.

In his new position of Administrative Officer, Benefits and Economic Services, Lloyd is staff contact on the daily administration of the Collective Agreements, teacher grievances and arbitrations, requests for legal assistance, Employment Insurance issues and teacher certification appeals. He will also serve as staff consultant to the Membership Benefits and Services Committee.

Perry received his Bachelor of Science (Mathematics) and a Bachelor of Education (High School) in 1985, and a Masters of Education (Teaching) in 1995 and has been involved in the teaching profession for the past 13 years. In 1985-86 he taught at Jackson Walsh High School in Western Bay. Following that he taught at Menihek Integrated High School in Labrador City. While at Menihek, he has held the positions of mathematics and science teacher, mathematics department head, co-operative education teacher, and school based coordinator of the Youth Apprenticeship Training Program. From May 1995 until April 1996 he was vice principal of the same school.

Since 1993, Perry has been chair of the Labrador West Branch Negotiating Team. He was a member of the Financial Review Committee for the Labrador West Branch of the NLTA, chair of the Labrador West Educational Partnership Steering Team, and co-chair of the Labrador West Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee. He was the Labrador West representative on the Department of Education's Professional Development and Education Partnership Committees. In 1988 he was vice-president of the Provincial NLTA Special Interest Council for Mathematics and served as the provincial representative on the National Council of the Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) in 1988-89.

In his new position as Administrative Officer, Benefits and Economic Services, Perry will serve as staff contact on the daily administration of the Collective Agreements, teacher grievances and arbitrations, Workers' Compensation (Injury on Duty) matters, teacher payroll issues and substitute teacher concerns. He will serve as one of the NLTA representatives on the Employer/Employee Relations Committee and will

also be involved with contract negotiations.

Students honour school name

Each year, students and staff at Holy Cross Elementary School in St. John's hold a celebration to honour their school name, and this year was no exception. On September 19th, festivities began with a prayer celebration, followed by a parade around the school neighbourhood. Students were then treated to cake and drinks. Celebrations continued into the afternoon with sack races, relays and a tug of war. Sharon Reddy, a Grade 3 teacher at Holy Cross, says a celebration such as this, particularly at the beginning of the school year, certainly helps in developing school spirit. "A great day was had by all!" she concluded.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Exploring future possibilities at the Newfoundland Science Centre

The Newfoundland Science Centre has just installed it's newest exhibit called Cybersense. Students can explore the potential of computers and the technological possibilities of the future. Cybersense features virtual reality, flight simulation, computer art, music, special effects, cybergames and more. Students can drum up a one-man band or become an NHL goalie and stop cyber pucks in the Virtual Reality Mandala System. Students can also check out Hollywood magic through morphing, computer graphics, special effects and animation or take off, do some aerial acrobatics, crash land and fly a Lear Jet without ever leaving the ground. Cybersense is suitable for all grades with a pre-visit package available for Grades 4 to 12. Located in the Murray Premises, 5 Becks Cove, St. John's, the Newfoundland Science Centre offers group rates and has a designated bus parking area. The Cybersense exhibit will be at the Science Centre for a limited time. To book your school group call 709-754-0823.

NLTA scholarships awarded

Four Newfoundland and Labrador students, who completed high school last June, have been awarded NLTA scholarships for 1997-98. They are: Gillian Gunther (Pasadena Academy), daughter of Dorothy Gunther of Pasadena; Karen Fennell (Regina High School), daughter of Thomas Fennell of Corner Brook; Amy Butt (Holy Heart of Mary High School), daughter of Bruce Butt of St. John's; and Peter Dawe (Queen Elizabeth Regional High School), son of Robert and Donna Dawe of Topsail.

The scholarships are awarded annually to dependents of active, retired, disabled, or deceased members of the NLTA and are valued at \$1,000 each. Awards are based on achievement in the scholarship exams administered by the Department of Education and are made in accordance with the Schools Act.

Foundation helps feed hungry school children

The School Children's Food Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador is a non-profit charitable organization established to foster the development of sustainable nutritious child food programs for school children throughout the province. The Foundation was instrumental in establishing the Provincial School Nutrition Fund, a special community partnership with Petro-Canada and the Government. This Fund was created to support the establishment of child food programs throughout the province. The Foundation is responsible for program development and fundraising, while the Government and Petro-Canada are sustaining partners for the Fund.

Grants are available from this fund to cover the start-up costs to establish a child food program, either breakfast, lunch or a snack program. The Fund also provides sustaining grants to programs that are in areas unable to financially sustain a program. Grants are available to community groups that are willing to take an active role in the delivery of these programs. Although the school is often the delivery site, the community and parents must take responsibility for these programs. To receive funding, programs that are planned must

be nutritious and hygienically sound, community supported, viable and sustainable, and universal and non-stigmatizing. The Foundation does not evaluate sustainability by financial criteria alone, but considers volunteer time and in-kind contributions made.

The Foundation has developed a booklet of helpful hints to assist interested parties with the establishment of a program. An application form which walks you through the steps of setting up a program is also included. To date, the Foundation has assisted with the establishment of 33 programs. For information, contact The School Children's Food Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, 10 Fort William Building, Factory Lane, St. John's, NF, A1C 6H5, Tel: 709-722-1996; Fax: 709-753-2702; e-mail: meals@thezone.net.

GOOD SCHOOLS

by Marita Moll and Bernie Froese-Germain

The first article in this series about technology and education looked at competing visions of the goals of education and the importance of social goals. This second piece focuses on good schools as caring social communities, and strong communities as complex social networks which include good schools.

Writer and researcher Robert Putnam has studied the phenomenon of citizen withdrawal from the groups and associations that make up the intricate fabric of American civil society. To highlight his point, in "Bowling Alone", he makes the unlikely connection between an increase in solitary bowling and the decline in civic participation in the U.S. "Between 1980 and 1993 the total number of bowlers in America increased by 10 percent, while league bowling decreased by 40 percent." Anticipating puzzlement among readers, he notes that "Lest this be thought a wholly trivial example, nearly 80 million Americans went bowling at least once during 1993, nearly a third more than voted in the 1994 congressional elections and roughly the same number as claim to attend church regularly." Such withdrawals, he said, signaled a decline in social capital: those trusts, norms and networks that strengthen society by facilitating coordinated actions.

Networks of civic engagement such as neighborhood associations, political parties, social clubs and religious functions all facilitate horizontal interaction and interpersonal communication in society. Putnam's studies showed that civic participation increased among individuals as their level of education increased. "The four years of education between 14 and 18 total years have ten times more impact on trust and membership (in groups) than the first four years of formal education mostly because of the skills, resources, and inclinations that were imparted to them at home and at school." Clearly, schools facilitate social relationships both inside and outside the school walls.

The social hologram

The networks that contribute to social capital function like holograms of human interaction, building up the trust which results in norms of reciprocity and facilitates cooperation. The contribution of schools to these complex networks must be taken into account. Larry Cuban describes teaching as a "knowledgeable, caring adult building a relationship with one or more students to help them learn what the teacher, the community, and parents believe is important." The importance of schools as caring communities based on the strength of the personal interactions among teachers, students and the wider community is a recurring theme in the literature on good schools.

The Good School: Strategies for Making Secondary Schools Effective describes a six-year program of Canadian research on the "good" school involving over 200 secondary schools, 60,000 students and 10,000 teachers in Ontario. The major determinants of the good school were found to be **achievement** --; credit accumulation and progress towards graduation, and **school atmosphere** --; comprised of a student's sense of belonging and pride in their school. A strong school climate or culture is also associated with students' and teachers' satisfaction and positive relationships in the school.

Canadian educational researcher Jane Gaskell notes that "an extensive review of the research on the organization of effective secondary schools [by Lee, Bryk and Smith] and found that the literature reflects two quite different views of schools: schools as formal organizations with structures, roles, and rules (what might be called a sociological perspective), and schools as small societies and cultural sites with a focus on relationships and norms for cultural membership (what might be called an anthropological or ethnographic perspective)." Gaskell and fellow researchers with the Exemplary Schools Project analyzed 21 effective

secondary schools across Canada. Recognizing that "school success is a complex, elusive, and constantly evolving concept", the project concluded that the three major tensions experienced by schools are between social and academic goals and functions; between responding to individual and group differences and providing a sense of community and equality of opportunity for all; and between professional autonomy and social accountability.

This study also concluded that:

- schools viewed success in both academic and social terms with the mix varying;
- although the immediate community had little influence on the academic core of schools, its impact was felt on peripheral subjects, shared values, and social goals;
- leadership was often rooted in the principal, but was also often shared by many in the institution; everyone recognized that the essential element in a successful school was the teachers;
- schools emphasized the importance of a warm and accepting student life, instilling a sense of belonging to a community, and use a variety of rituals, a sense of tradition, and shared experiences to promote this attitude.

What is the problem?

Despite the positive correlation between civic participation and educational attainment, Putnam observed a trend toward decreasing levels of citizen participation even as American society as a whole was becoming better educated. An examination of the impacts of increased mobility and urbanization, the pressures of time and money, the changing role of women, and other recent social and economic phenomena failed to yield a clear explanation for this dichotomy. Finally, he turns his attention to technology, specifically television. Television was heralded as a great enabler, both educationally and socially, during its early days. But Putnam's research finds a strong negative correlation between television watching and community involvement. "Television privatizes our leisure time" leading to reduced participation in social, recreational and community activities among people of all ages. Other researchers have documented the capacity of new technologies to both enable and disable various aspects of our social and economic environment. The unintended effects of technologies can easily lead to Faustian bargains.

There is little or no information about how the introduction of new technologies will impact on school culture, for example how they will affect the relationship between teacher, student, and community. Canadian educational researcher David Livingstone notes that, with respect to computers, many teachers sense the need to consider the trade-offs. "The reluctance of many teachers to embrace computers more fully in classroom practices may be quite intimately linked with a knowledge of the intangible human dimensions that they and their students could be losing the wholesale introduction of microcomputers, as currently designed, into our classroom curricula could both diminish the social relational dimensions of the teaching-learning process and serve to de-skill teachers' work."

Pondering why we would unconsciously lead schools into such uncharted territory, American educator and technology critic Neil Postman asks: "Is there a problem to which technology in the schools is the answer And whose problem is it?"

Whose problem is it?

Polling data from the biannual OISE surveys of public opinion on education in Ontario provide some clues to answering the question, "Whose problem is it?" These polls have shown that corporate executives are more likely to indicate dissatisfaction with the quality of education than are parents --; the latter group is generally more supportive of public schools, particularly their neighbourhood school. In other words, those most dissatisfied with schools belong to a small but very powerful and very vocal group.

It has become a fashion for powerful groups, among them politicians, bureaucrats, and business leaders, to

criticize education, blame teachers and administrators for perceived problems, and present technological solutions to what are complex educational problems. "Changes to the Canadian economy, government cuts, demands from parents and critics are all factors influencing education reform. Surveys indicate that Canadians expect the Information Highway to provide a solution", said a 1994 Industry Canada report. In their 1994 Education Statement, the Information Technology Association of Canada states that "Individual teachers must be held accountable. Ill-prepared and inexperienced educators, unable to work effectively in the electronic learning environments of our future, place limits on student access to knowledge and information." Skills-based training, especially for technological skills, and the relentless drive to make computers and electronic networking a cornerstone of a "re-formed" education are presented by these groups as the priorities for education reform.

As we pointed out in the previous article in this series, if society's interest in education revolves around its contribution to "economic capital" rather than "social capital", communities will become impoverished places indeed. There must be more recognition that it is the community that creates and is served by the economy, and not the reverse; and more recognition that good schools are primary facilitators of the social capital needed to build strong communities.

The road ahead

This does not mean that good schools reject modern technologies. It does mean, however, that in an era of shrinking resources, the importance of human resources must be the primary consideration in discussions about school improvement. Unless and until we situate the role of technology in the classroom within the context of what constitutes good schools and strong communities, and more broadly, within a serious discussion of the goals of public education within a democratic society, we will only be putting the cart before the horse.

How did things get this confused? "Elementary" Sherlock Holmes would have said. "First, everyone follows a false trail, going so far down the wrong path that by the time they return, the original scene bears no resemblance to the one they left behind." The next installment in this series will discuss one of those false trails --; the fantastic claims of learning benefits through the use of new information technologies.

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



APPLYING FOR EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

Academic Year 1998-99

The deadline for applications for educational leave (academic year 1998-99) is February 1, 1998. Teachers who are interested should apply to their school districts in accordance with Article 20.03 of the Collective Agreement using the application contained on the following two pages. School districts should forward approved applications to: Mr. Gary Hatcher, Director of School Services and Professional Development, Department of Education, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NF, A1B 4J6. In accordance with the Collective Agreement, the Educational Leave Committee will make its selection by March 1, 1998. Please note that only the information contained in the application will be used by the Committee in the selection process and that additional information will not be considered. The successful applicants will be notified before the end of March. Please take particular note of the eligibility requirements (20.01) and of the continuing employment commitment if your application is accepted (20.07). The corresponding article in the Labrador West Agreement is Article 32.

Educational Leave Selection Criteria: 1998-99

General:

- (1) An attempt is made to award leaves so there is no disruption among the various school districts of the province in relation to the teacher population of those districts;
- (2) There is an attempt to allocate leaves to males and females in the proportion that each group is represented within the teaching force.

Specific:

- (1) Financial: (a) number of dependents; (b) other awards, scholarships, fellowships, etc., received during period of leave.
- (2) Education History: (a) certificate level; (b) degrees held and dates conferred; (c) major field of study; (d) date of last course taken; (e) opportunity to upgrade at local level.
- (3) Years of teaching experience.
- (4) Professional involvements.
- (5) The educational needs of the district as recommended by the Director.
- (6) The educational needs of the province.

The general criteria are quite clear in intent and govern the overall selection of leave recipients. Numbers 1 through 4 of the specific criteria are designed to give a detailed profile of the applicant, including the concept of need and the professional background. In addition, the educational needs of the school district and the province are considerations which may vary in weight or nature from year to year.

It is important to realize that the program of study which the applicant intends to pursue is one of the factors considered in deciding on the allocation of educational leaves, and when leave is granted to an individual it is granted on the basis of the information contained on the application form. **If a successful applicant finds it necessary to change his/her planned program of study from that indicated on the application, the Selection Committee will then reconsider the granting of the leave before making a final decision.** All leaves granted are awarded on that basis.

Considering the above, it is to the applicant's advantage if acceptance to the program indicated is obtained prior to applying for the educational leave. Many programs are extremely limited in the number of seats available, so applicants should be reasonably sure of acceptance before listing a particular program.

No one factor of those listed in the above criteria dominates the Committee's final decision. Each member of the Committee, after thorough discussion of all the factors and after reviewing in detail the information on each applicant, has input to the final selection. Every effort is made to apply the criterion in a consistent fashion, and some aspects of the procedure may be computer-assisted.

POLICY REGARDING AWARDING OF EDUCATIONAL LEAVES

- (1) The maximum leave to be awarded any one teacher shall be 2 ¹/₂ university semesters.
- (2) Leave shall normally be awarded for a duration of 1 or ¹/₂ university semesters.
- (3) A teacher will be eligible to receive an additional award five years after receiving an award.
- (4) Notwithstanding the above, a teacher may receive additional awards if that teacher is pursuing a program of studies at the request of the Educational Leave Committee or a program of studies which the Committee has identified as one to receive priority.
- (5) In any given year if the number of leaves available exceeds the number of "first-time" applicants, the additional awards will be given to applicants who have received an award previously.

ARTICLE 20 -- EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

20.01 Subject to the other provisions of this article, a teacher who has been employed in Newfoundland as a teacher for five years or more may be eligible for educational leave up to one year.

20.02 There shall be an Educational Leave Committee consisting of five members, two of whom shall be appointed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

20.03 Teachers who are eligible for educational leave and who wish to obtain such leave shall make application to the school board. Only applications which are approved by the school board shall be forwarded to the Educational Leave Committee.

20.04 Prior to January 1 each year, the Minister shall notify the Educational Leave Committee of the number of teachers who may be granted educational leave in the coming school year. In any event, the minimum number of teachers who may be granted leave shall be 30 per year, or the equivalent.

20.05 The Educational Leave Committee shall, not later than the first day of March of the year of the award, select those teachers who are to be granted educational leave. The number selected by the Committee shall not exceed the number indicated by the Minister in accordance with 20.04.

20.06 Leave granted under this article shall be at the rate of $\frac{2}{3}$ salary.

20.07 Upon completion of the educational leave, a teacher shall return to the school board from which leave was granted, for a period of not less than double the period of leave granted.

20.08 A teacher granted educational leave shall, subject to Article 9, on return be given the same position or comparable position in the same school, unless it is mutually agreed between the teacher and the school board that the teacher return to a particular position.

20.09 The period in which a teacher is on educational leave with pay shall be considered as full time taught.

20.10 Nothing in this article shall be deemed to preclude leave privileges which may be available to teachers under Article 19.

APPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

September 1998 -- August 1999

NAME:

S.I.N.:

DATE OF BIRTH:

HOME ADDRESS:

PHONE: (Home)

(School)

SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESENT TEACHING CERTIFICATE:

DEGREES/DIPLOMAS:

Degree/Diploma:	<input type="text"/>	Major Field of Study:	<input type="text"/>	Date Conferred:	<input type="text"/>
Degree/Diploma:	<input type="text"/>	Major Field of Study:	<input type="text"/>	Date Conferred:	<input type="text"/>
Degree/Diploma:	<input type="text"/>	Major Field of Study:	<input type="text"/>	Date Conferred:	<input type="text"/>

CURRENT TEACHING ASSIGNMENT:

DATE OF LAST COURSE TAKEN:

NO. OF YEARS TEACHING:

In the Province: Elsewhere:

List dependents, giving ages:

List of other awards, scholarships, fellowships, etc., which will be received for the period of leave:

List of professional involvements for the past three years:

DATES FOR WHICH LEAVE IS REQUESTED:

First Choice: _____ 19 _____ to 19 _____

Second Choice: _____ 19 _____ to 19 _____

Educational Institution: _____

What program of study do you intend to pursue? _____

Have you been accepted for this program of studies for the semester(s) indicated?

Yes No

(If yes, please attach confirmation of acceptance from the educational institute.)

PURPOSE FOR LEAVE:

(Give an indication of your educational goals, area of study to be pursued, etc. Attach an additional sheet if required.)

PLEASE ATTACH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE USEFUL TO THE SELECTION COMMITTEE.

I hereby certify that I fulfill the requirements for educational leave as outlined in Article 20.01 of the Collective Agreement and accept the obligation imposed by Article 20.07.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

NOTE: Please forward to teacher's School District and from there it will be forwarded to: Mr. Gary Hatcher, Director of School Services and Professional Development, Department of Education, Confederation Building, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NF, A1B 4J6. Application must be received by the Selection Committee by **February 1, 1998.**

OFFICE USE ONLY

**Approved on behalf of School District No. _____
which agrees to the provision of Article 20.08 and 20.09.**

School District Comments/Recommendations:

Date: _____

Signature: _____
(*Chairperson or Director of Education*)

**Recommended for educational leave by the Educational Leave
Committee for the period of:**

_____ 19 _____ to _____
_____ 19 _____

Program of Study: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

TEACHER HONORED

At a student leadership conference held in Montreal this past September, Josephine Budgell, a teacher at Leo Burke Academy in Bishops Falls, was presented with a Barry Sharpe Award for Outstanding Leadership by the Canadian Association of Student Activity Advisors (CASAA).

Ms. Budgell has been involved in promoting and developing student leadership activities nationally and provincially for the past ten years. She was chair of the first provincial Student Leadership Conference at Leo Burke Academy in 1989, and co-chair of the ninth National Student Leadership Conference in Bishop's Falls in 1993. As well, Ms. Budgell has presented workshops at all provincial Student Leadership Conferences and at the past five national conferences.

Ms. Budgell says she has always been interested in student activities and has nurtured that interest since she secured her first teaching position in Clarendville. "I have encouraged students to get training in leadership and to use this in their schools, province and country," she says. "And I have assisted them wherever possible to get involved and use their skills to develop their leadership." Ms. Budgell has also encouraged and assisted many teachers in their student leadership development and aided them in planning and preparing conferences.

Ms. Budgell has served on the executive of the CASAA for a number of years. During that time she has served as the Newfoundland Director, second vice president, first vice president, president, and in her last year with the board of directors, she held the position of past president. Now that Ms. Budgell's involvement at the national level is not consuming as much of her time, she has decided to focus her energies on the provincial equivalent of CASAA, the Newfoundland Teachers' Association of Activity Advisors, in which she holds the current position of president.

"This award is like a nice prize, but I get my reward every time I attend a conference and see the growth the students experience. The students are the reason I became so involved, and why I will continue to promote student leadership on both the provincial and national scale," she concluded.

(Some information for this item was taken from an article by Natasha Penney in "The Advertiser" in Grand Falls-Windsor.)

Securing Its Future

THE CANADA PENSION PLAN

by Wayne Noseworthy

In February of 1997, Federal-Provincial agreement was reached on changes to ensure the Canada Pension Plan's financial sustainability and to make it fairer and more affordable for future generations of Canadians.

The changes to secure the CPP are supported by the Federal Government and the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta. This support meets the statutory requirement that changes to the CPP receive the concurrence of at least two-thirds of the provinces with two-thirds of the country's population.

A Balanced Approach

Today, the 5.85% legislated CPP contribution rate is shared equally between employees and employers. Contributions are levied on earnings between \$3,500 and \$35,800. Under the existing legislated schedule, rates would have risen to 10.1% by the year 2016. However, the chief actuary of the CPP indicated that, without changes, the CPP fund would have been depleted by the year 2015 and contribution rates would have to increase to 14.2% by the year 2030 to cover escalating costs. The CPP was not sustainable on this basis.

A three-part approach to restore the financial strength of the CPP has been agreed upon and is comprised of the following elements:

- Moving to fuller funding by accelerating contribution rate increases now so that they will not have to exceed 10% for future generations (50/50 split);
- Improving the rate of return on the CPP fund by investing it prudently in a diversified portfolio of securities at arm's length from government; and
- Slowing the growth in costs by tightening the administration of benefits and changing the way some are calculated.

The following important features of the Canada Pension Plan will remain unchanged:

- Anyone currently receiving CPP retirement pensions, disability benefits, survivor benefits or combined benefits, will not see these benefits affected (persons over age 65 as of December 31, 1997, who elect to start CPP retirement pensions after that date will also not see these pensions affected);
- All benefits under the CPP, except the one-time death benefit, will remain fully indexed to inflation;
- The ages of retirement --; early, normal or late --; will remain unchanged.

Fuller Funding

When the Canada Pension Plan was introduced in 1966, it was financed on a pay-as-you-go basis. The prospects of rapid growth in real wages and labour force participation promised that the CPP could be sustained and remain affordable. The pay-as-you-go CPP system made sense at that time.

Since then, however, the slow down in wage and work force growth and higher real interest rates have completely changed the circumstances in which the CPP must be financed. Pay-as-you-go financing is no longer fair and appropriate.

Building up a larger fund --; fuller funding --; and earning a higher rate of return through investment in the market will help pay for the rapidly growing costs that will occur once baby-boomers begin to retire.

Under the proposed schedule, the contribution rate will be 6.0% for 1997 and 6.4% in 1998. This rate will be shared on a 50/50 basis between employees and employers. The 0.15 percentage point difference between the current 5.85% rate and 6.0% will be collected when 1997 tax returns are filed. The maximum extra cost to employees and their employers will be \$24 each.

Changes to Benefits and Administration

The following changes will come into effect on January 1, 1998:

- The formula for adjusting previous earnings in calculating retirement pensions will be based on the average of the year's maximum pensionable earnings (YMPE) in the last five (instead of three) years prior to starting the pension.
- The administration of disability benefits will be further improved; the appeal process will be streamlined and the legislation will be applied more consistently.
- To be eligible for disability benefits, workers must have made CPP contributions (on earnings over \$3,500) in four of the last six years prior to becoming disabled.
- Retirement pensions for disability beneficiaries will be based on maximum pensionable earnings at the time of disability and then fully priced indexed to age 65.
- The rules for combining survivor and disability benefits, and survivor and retirement benefits will be largely the same as those in existence before 1987. Changes will limit the extent to which these benefits can be added together.
- The death benefit will be equal to six months of retirement benefits up to a maximum of \$2,500. Currently, the maximum is at 10% of the YMPE --; \$3,580 in 1997.

Next Steps

The new measures will become law only if legislation to amend the CPP is passed by Parliament, and supporting Orders in Council are approved by two-thirds of the provinces representing two-thirds of the population of Canada. The various jurisdictions have agreed to pass Orders in Council before January 1, 1998.

This will allow all the provisions to come into effect as planned --; January 1, 1998, for the benefit and investment measures and January 1, 1997, for the contribution rate increase.

Readers who would like a copy of the full text of the information provided by Finance Canada can contact the Benefits and Economic Services Division of NLTA.

Wayne Noseworthy is Executive Director of the NLTA.

FINANCIAL WELLNESS

by Al Antle

Exactly what is financial wellness? Does it mean debt free status? Does it refer to the size of your RSP portfolio, your savings level or the amount you hold in stock? Does financial wellness and financial health mean a good understanding of money and how it works?

At the Personal Credit Counselling Service of Newfoundland and Labrador (PCCS) we believe financial wellness is all of these things and, at the same time, we believe it's only some of these things and in some circumstances, none at all.

Financial wellness, like any wellness, is a state of mind. From financial wellness flows financial health and ultimately financial contentment, stability and security.

Financial wellness though, is not a single, huge state of harmony. Rather it is a group of smaller pockets all working independently and well, and yet each contributing to the overall system.

Think of your finances as you would a body and think of the working or costs of your finances as you would the various systems within the body. For example, instead of a respiratory system, you've got "housing costs" etc. There are nine systems or cost areas within each household. These are: Housing; Food; Clothing; Transportation; Recreation, Entertainment, Reading, and Education; Health and Personal Care; Savings and Security; Debt Servicing; and Addictive Behaviour.

To assess your wellness, you would need to approach each of these "systems" critically and ask yourself how well you are doing in each area. For example, under "Housing" ask yourself are you over-housed? Is your house energy efficient or do you tend to defer maintenance? And under "Recreation" you might ask if you have an identified budget for spending time with your spouse, and do you use it? Under "Food," you could ask yourself if you rely a great deal on convenience foods, or have you forgotten how to cook?

If you are an average family, you'll find you're very good in some of these areas and very poor in others. In the majority though, you'll be average. The challenge is to improve your wellness, and only you can decide just how well you want to be. Becoming completely well financially, like becoming completely well physically, takes commitment, dedication, time and, in no small way, fate. In the end, you may have to accept that you're "weller" but not quite "wellest" and you are working on it.

Whatever you do, don't beat yourself up, just keep working toward wellness. And remember the words of Jerry Gillies in his text Money Love. "Money, how important is it? Prosperity is living easily and happily in the real world, whether you have money or not."

Personal Credit Counselling Service is a community based, charitable, Family Service Agency offering financial counselling and other services free of charge to consumers. What does PCCS do?

Counselling: We simply sit down with clients and help them find solutions to their financial concerns. This also includes helping clients work through a budget and to learn how to track and control their spending.

Creditor interventions: Sometimes our clients need us to intervene with their creditors - a third party to advocate or explain on their behalf why they cannot make full payments in the short term.

Debt Retirement Programs (DRP): As an alternative to bankruptcy for many clients, we can arrange

extended repayment schedules with creditors which enables clients to repay their debts in full over a longer period of time.

Community Education: We are always happy to provide a speaker for school, community, church and employee groups interested in budgeting and credit issues.

With the Christmas season fast approaching you might find the following tips useful:

- 1) Start early and avoid the last minute panic.
- 2) Decide for whom you are shopping and how much you can afford to spend on each person.
- 3) Draw names instead of buying gifts for all of the adults in your extended family.
- 4) Give hand-crafted items or gifts of your time and service.
- 5) Shop around for the best price on an item before purchasing.
- 6) Leave your credit cards at home. (You'll spend 30% more if you have them).
- 7) Avoid using credit unless you are able and prepared to pay the extra cost of interest charges.
- 8) Don't use lavish gifts as a means of boosting your self-image.

Al Antle is Programme Manager with Personal Credit Counselling of Newfoundland & Labrador. If you would like more information about PCCS or would like to arrange a workshop with Al Antle at your school or with your NLTA branch, contact your EAP Program Coordinators at the NLTA, Kathy Burford (Ext. 242) or Claudette Coombs at (Ext. 265).

ALEXANDER STREET SCHOOL

by Lesley-Ann Browne

Alexander Street School is located, as you had probably guessed, on Alexander Street in downtown St. John's. It is the province's only district school with a unique and challenging mandate. The school is operated by the Avalon East School Board and, in an attempt to meet the needs of a much larger school district, has recently undergone significant changes. Programs are offered for all schools that operate under the Avalon East School Board in four distinct areas that include enrichment, learning disabilities, environmental education and severe behaviour/emotional needs.

David Philpott, the school's principal states, "the phenomenon of a 'district school' is gaining in popularity for large school boards that are spread over wide geographical areas. The model is based on the belief that specialized programs should be available to every child with specialized needs and that the school's programming options should not be limited by the size of the school, the expertise of the staff, or the services in that community. We endeavour to provide direct service to students in their neighbourhood school in a fair and equitable fashion." In doing so the school offers an itinerant model while also providing teacher/parent consultation and professional development to schools. The mandate of the school is extensive and it provides many other services as well, but for this article we will focus on those mentioned above.

The school provides an alternative classroom setting for a number of students with severe needs. Alexander Street School staff initiate a careful and intensive screening process to identify students who are appropriate referrals and in the greatest need of this service. The school also has an itinerant teacher who provides direct instruction to students in their home or designated alternate environment until they are able to make the transition back to their neighbourhood school. This teacher, together with the student's program planning team, develops and sets up an individual plan that will maintain linkage to the neighbourhood school and outline procedures to help with the transition of the student back to a classroom setting.

At the Alexander Street School many students are actively involved with the justice system. These students have unique and challenging needs and often require a significant amount of dialogue and program planning. Alexander Street School provides the services of an educational liaison for the educational and justice systems. This person is actively involved in the program planning for students in transition to and from custody arrangements. Besides these duties with youth justice concerns, the liaison person is actively involved in the program planning and delivery for all of the school's programs.

Space is limited in all of the behavioral programs and remains under great demand. The intake process is one that attempts to identify the students in greatest need who will benefit the most from placement. Referral is made through the school's Educational Psychologist who in turn refers to the Principal at Alexander Street School. The Program Planning Team must be able to show that all other options to address the needs of this student have been exhausted. Alexander Street staff will accept students in consultation with the Program Specialist for Student Support Services at district office.

The Enrichment Program 1997-98

The Enrichment Program of the Avalon East School Board for 1997-98 will be a pilot program, multifaceted in its approach to meeting students' needs. There will be a school-based program, a district pull-out program and an enrichment mini course program.

In consultation with enrichment personnel, school staffs will decide the most appropriate mode of delivery

of the school based program. This may vary from school to school based on the enrichment history of the school, the identification of students, talent pool size and logistical concerns such as space. The level of service available to a school may change as the district model evolves.

The district will offer a pull-out program to exceptionally able Grade 5 students. This pull-out will take place at the Alexander Street School for one day per cycle for an eight-cycle block. Identification for this program will be based on the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test. This program will begin when the identification process is completed.

The Enrichment Mini Course Program is offered in partnership with Memorial University, the College of the North Atlantic and the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Gifted Children. It provides an opportunity for able and/or talented junior high students to participate in three to five day mini courses. These courses are planned in consultation with enrichment staff and delivered by post-secondary instructors. Schools will be notified in the winter to initiate student application for this diverse program; space is limited.

The Learning Disabilities Program 1997-98

The goal of the Learning Disabilities Program is to identify and develop supports, accommodations and instructional strategies that will help teachers in their work with students who have learning disabilities to enable these students to reach their greatest potential.

Direct service will involve meeting with the student either in his/her own classroom or in a resource room setting to observe the student informally. Learning disabilities teachers will also consult with educational personnel and parents, as required, to determine individual student needs. This will enable the learning disabilities teacher to make recommendations for instructional strategies, accommodations and other supports to the student's teachers. The number of sessions required will be decided by the Learning Disabilities teacher. They will also be assessing the need for a small pull-out program for the more severely involved students. Such a program would be held at the Alexander Street School.

By undergoing extensive changes, the Alexander Street School is attempting to meet the needs of a larger district and mandate. In addition to a direct service, the school programs and teachers are actively involved in researching and developing new and exciting approaches that will chart the course in the many challenging areas. The mandate is extensive, exciting and very much in demand. There are presently 15 teachers at the school, one educational liaison, and two student assistants. The principal, David Philpott, can be reached at 709-753-9124.

The information for this article was compiled by Lesley-Ann Browne in consultation with staff from the Alexander Street School.

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

by Jerry Vink

November 20th is National Child Day, when we focus on the rights and responsibilities as defined in the "Convention on the Rights of the Child". The following article is an introduction to its implications. The full text of this and other documents cited can be found on the Internet at <http://susie.stemnet.nf.ca/~nlhra>.

There is a growing awareness about the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its impact on provincial legislation and regulations. How does it influence the classroom and other service delivery to children?

To understand its implications, one has to start with the events leading up to the enactment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

With the end of the hostilities of the Second World War, people became aware of the full extent of the devastation of that horrible conflict. The public was numbed by scenes from cities such as Dresden, which had been incinerated in a fire storm or of Soviet cities devastated by brutal warfare. There were unspeakable scenes from Nanking as well as of the mushroom clouds over Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

There were other dark and terrible pictures. Auschwitz, Treblinka and other camps that existed to exterminate human beings. Their names became synonymous with images of walking skeletons, stacks of emaciated bodies, and piles of human hair, shoes, glasses and personal belongings. More than six million Jews, gypsies, persons with disabilities, homosexuals and others deemed to be "sub-human" were eliminated through organized and scientific means.

These horrors prodded the allied governments to proclaim the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. In bold and inspiring language, it sets forth the first modern principles of human rights.

Governments have continued to enact laws to provide substance to the Universal Declaration Of Human Rights. Starting with the covenants of Civil and Political Rights and of Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, and later with such conventions as the one on the Rights of the Child, the world is developing an international body of human rights legislation.

Much has been said about the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some people have argued that we don't need it because children don't have rights and only need to be protected. Others feel that it will destroy families and parental authority because it gives too much power to children and the state. In addition, it will cost too much money to implement all its articles and clauses.

In reality, the Convention codifies rights in a common sense manner and represents a progressive foundation to develop services to children and their families. Unfortunately, it is impossible because of space constraints to go through every one of its articles. Therefore, this article will identify only some basic themes to assist in interpreting its scope.

Firstly, the Convention defines a triangular relationship. Children have rights. Some of these are limited when children are very young. This applies to such rights as freedom of expression. Others, however, are absolute, such as the right to education or to a name. Parents are responsible for the child and are obliged to provide guidance and direction "in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child".

Government is to provide an environment, and in some cases services, so that families and children can grow in a positive manner.

Secondly, children have the same rights as adults with a small number of exceptions such as the right to vote or to be elected to public office. Most cannot be denied or limited and apply in the same way as to adults. The list is quite extensive and includes the right to life; to registration, nationality and identity; to family life; to an adequate standard of health and living and social security; to education and to the culture of his or her group; and to rest and leisure.

Other rights are also similar to those of adults but are achieved on a gradual basis as the child matures. Parents have a role by providing guidance and direction. These rights involve the freedom of expression, thought, conscience, religion and association.

The Convention also contains rights which are special to children because they are vulnerable. These protection rights apply when the child is in need of protection; to be adopted; is a refugee, disabled, or requires rehabilitation; or special consideration if accused or convicted.

Thirdly, decisions are made every day by government officials and others concerning the well-being of children. Too often, they are not in the best interest of the child but rather are based on such factors as the cost of the action, or the interests of parents or institutions. Thus, the best interest of the child is not always a primary consideration.

However, Article 3 states that: in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

This gives the Convention a very broad scope. It does not limit itself to the welfare of children, but also applies to a wider area --; public and private institutions and the formulation of government policies. Thus, the Convention can be an important tool for groups who are lobbying government to bring about more appropriate legislation and programs.

Fourth, the Convention also has a number of rights that deal with the mistreatment of children and their need for special protection. Thus we have prohibitions against economic exploitation (Article 32), sexual exploitation (Article 34), other forms of exploitation (Article 36) and cruel punishment (Article 37). Furthermore, it seeks to ensure that school discipline is fairly administered (Article 28.2) and that children who have been mistreated be provided services for their re-integration into society (Article 39). The Convention makes it obligatory that States protect children who might be abused by parents or legal guardians (Article 19).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a major tool in the protection of children. We must become familiar with this document and we must constantly lobby to have national, provincial and municipal rules and regulations brought into line. Too often, our elected representatives forget that children have rights. The Convention is not perfect, but it is a beginning.

Jerry Vink is Executive Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Association.

RESOURCES

The School Car

The School Car, by Newfoundland author, Randy Noseworthy, documents the School on Wheels program, an imaginative approach which used a railway car as a mobile schoolhouse to provide basic school services to isolated railway settlements in Newfoundland from 1936 until 1942. The book also documents the history of the railway car which was used in the program, from its origin as the private car Shawnauldith through to its last years of service and its ultimate fate. Drawing on the transcriptions of many hours of recorded interviews with the former head teacher, former students, retired railroaders, and others, Mr. Noseworthy presents much of their thoughts and recollections in their own words. The book is extensively illustrated with over 125 photographs, most of which have never been previously published. Copies of The School Car are available in bookstores for \$19.95. To order by mail, send cheque or money order for \$24.95 to Randy P. Noseworthy at R.P.N. Publishing, P.O. Box 23, Main Street, Whitbourne, NF, A0B 3K0; Tel: 709-759-2725.

Free Classroom Guide

Pit Pony, Joyce Barkhouses' much-loved tale of boy coal miner Willie MacLean, and his friendship with a Sable Island horse named Gem, is now a CBC movie, airing Sunday, December 14. In light of the story's popularity among Canadian schoolchildren, the film's producer, Cochran Entertainment, has commissioned a ready-to-use classroom guide to help teachers and students learn from the film and book. The guide was created by a team of experienced educators equipped with behind-the-scenes interviews about how the movie was made. It includes background information, resources and lesson plans divided into three units: a novel study (intended for Grades 4 to 6); a media literacy unit (Grades 6 to 9); and a social studies section that complements both other units. The guide can be downloaded free from the Internet at <http://www.pitpony.com>.

Grading the Teacher: A Canadian Parent's Guide

Former Toronto elementary school teacher, Nellie Jacobs, a mother of four, examines the profound effect teachers can have on children in Grading the Teacher: A Canadian Parent's Guide. The book offers common-sense advice for evaluating teachers and what to do when they don't measure up. Educators can also use this book as a guide to improve their own and staff teaching. Grading the Teacher is available at retail stores for \$16.99.

Ice Safety Resources From Red Cross

The following resources are available free of charge from the Canadian Red Cross: 3' x 7' card What's Wrong With Each of These Pictures (Grades 4 and up); pamphlet Cold Water Survival (Grades 7 and up); poster How To Get Someone Out of Hot Water After They Fall Through Thin Ice (Grades 4 and up); activity flyer (student information) Think Twice, Thin Ice (Grades 6 and up); activity flyer (facilitators' package) Think Twice, Thin Ice; flyer Common Questions and Answers About Ice Safety; poster Ice Safety Begins With You; video Bill The Bass (available for loan). Contact: Wayne Young, Canadian Red Cross, Newfoundland & Labrador Region, 7 Wicklow Street, St. John's, NF, A1B 3Z9; Tel: 709-758-2449; Fax: 709-758-2463.

Web Publishing for Teachers

Web Publishing for Teachers is written for K-12 and college educators who are ready to enrich their curriculum by creating Web pages for themselves, their school, or with their students. This book guides you through designing, developing, and publishing a page on the World Wide Web and is packed with tips and techniques for making the most out of producing publications for this exciting new medium. Web Publishing for Teachers is available in bookstores for \$34.99.

CALENDAR of Upcoming Events

Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence

November 21, 1997 (Nomination Deadline)

This program is now open to teachers in all disciplines. For information and application forms, Tel: 1-800-268-6608; e-mail: pmawards@ic.gc.ca; website: www.schoolnet.ca.

Canadian Overseas Teacher Recruitment Fair

February 13-15, 1998

University of Toronto Faculty of Education. Jointly sponsored by the University of Toronto and Search Associates. Teaching candidates can meet prospective overseas school administrators face-to-face. Contact: Bob Barlas, R.R.#5, Belleville, ON, K8N 4Z5, Tel: 613-967-4902; Fax: 613-967-8981; e-mail: rbarlas@connect.reach.net.

CONNECTED: School Libraries at the Millennium

May 14-17, 1998

Charlottetown, PEI. A national conference jointly sponsored by the Association for Teacher-Librarianship in Canada and the Prince Edward Island Teacher-Librarians' Association. Contact: Ray Doiron, Faculty of Education, UPEI, 550 University Avenue, Charlottetown, PE, C1A 4P3; e-mail: tlconfer@upei.ca; Conference Web Site: <http://www.upei.ca/~tlconfer/>.

The Chancellor's Group Conference Grant Program (valued at \$500) is provided to assist young teacher-librarians (under 35) to attend this national event. For grant applications and/or inquiries, contact: Victoria Pennell, ATLC Past President, P.O. Box 9, Pouch Cove, NF, A0A 3L0; Fax: 709-364-7744; e-mail: vpennell@calvin.stemnet.nf.ca. Deadline for applications is March 30, 1998.