

STA WEB UPDATE

By now, I hope that some of you have noticed the brand new web presence of the Sooke Teachers Association. After many long weeks and months of labouring over format, content and 'browsability' of the new web pages, the new site is finally up and running.

Kudos to our intrepid and determined office manager (and newly anointed 'web ninja') Sue Begin for all of her many hours of toil and training in making the new web site come to life. The new site is much more flexible than it formerly was, and we hope to have a more frequent flow of information to and through the site.

In the hopes of drawing more people to use the site, and as a gesture to greener practices, this "Update" has been sent as a notice, and URL link to the staff reps in each school. In future, we will send the same link to reps, accompanied by the .pdf version of new documents, in lieu of the former, paper-wasting hard copy of the newsletter to each member.

If there is any additional information, or categories of information, that any of you would like to see added to the website, please let us know.

BARGAINING UPDATE

After many months of raising the subject of local bargaining at public board meetings, and after a series of letters formally expressing our intent to the trustees, as well as our invitation to begin local bargaining, we finally had our first meeting at the local 'table.' On Tuesday, March 8th, the local bargaining team sat down with the district bargaining team to discuss protocols for the upcoming round.

We hope that as many people as possible will be able to make it to the **General Meeting of Wednesday, March 16th at Isabelle Reader Theatre**. At that meeting, the bargaining team will be presenting our bargaining proposals for ratification by the membership. This is a very important step in the process, as we mark the commencement of bargaining. The ratification of our local bargaining proposals is a formality, but an important one in making sure that teachers are aware of what is going to be negotiated, and to provide input that reflects their respective priorities.



General Meeting

Wednesday,

March 16

Isabelle Reader Theatre

4:00 p.m.

Bargaining Status Report

JOHN ABBOTT VISITS SD62

One of the most sought-after commentators on the current and future state of education in the developed world was invited here by superintendent Jim Cambridge to speak to educators and interested members of the public. Mr. Abbott spoke of historical influences on education during the recent and distant past. He also spoke of his "21st Century Learning Initiative" and likened it to an "upside down and inside out" rethinking of how we educate students in this century. He also spoke about how we have to think more critically about how we prepare students for a future that is becoming increasingly difficult to predict. In all of his presentation, there was little reference to technology, and much more to learning from history, and to focusing on how we think about education. We heard about pedagogy, of course, but also about the professional, political and societal shifts that will be necessary to influence significant and meaningful change; change not only in educational practice, but change in beliefs and values that must be affected outside of the classroom, if meaningful change is to occur within.

Reading about and listening to Mr. Abbott clarifies for us how those with a preoccupation with technology will piggyback on his ideas in efforts to re-define his message to suit their own priorities. And of course, there are others on the peripheries of public education who have a concerted interest in seeing greater investment in technology for its own sake. What first comes to mind is the recently circulated "Speak Up" survey. This survey was created by a corporate-funded organization from the U.S. that promotes the interests of tech companies. Click here to learn more about that survey:

<http://www.bctf.ca/announcements.aspx?id=21839>

We must also be wary of those within the world of public education who would promote Information Technology, and the proliferation of hardware as indispensable vehicles to reach the goals of the 21st Century Learning Initiative. As life-long learners, and being progressive by nature, teachers will always avail themselves of techniques and tools (technological or otherwise) that will engage students, improve teaching practice, and personalize learning wherever possible. However, regardless of which side of the 21st Century debate that people may find themselves, ways of thinking must always precede ways of doing.

Joanna Larson, president of Prince Rupert local, has written a terrific article in Teacher Magazine that speaks to the teaching/technology dichotomy, which you can read here.

<http://www.bctf.ca/publications/NewsMagArticle.aspx?id=22368>

And if you haven't yet seen the latest edition of Teacher Magazine, you can view the full publication in .pdf format here.

<http://bctf.ca/publications/NewsMag.aspx?id=22369>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 2011

16 General Meeting 4:00 p.m.
Isabelle Reader Theatre (Spencer)

General Meeting
Wednesday,
March 16

Bargaining Status
Report

18 Schools close for Spring Break
19-22 BCTF Annual General Meeting
21-25 SPRING BREAK
28 Back to School

April 2011

6 Exec Meeting 4:00 p.m.
STA Office
13 Rep Assembly 4:00 p.m.
Spencer School Library
15 Non-Instructional Day; Pro-D
Pro-D Opportunity:
Gary Anaka: Brain Based Learning
8:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Isabelle Reader Theatre
Cost: \$10.00
22 *Good Friday*
25 *Easter Monday*

May 2011

4 Exec Meeting 4:00 p.m.
STA Office
19 **STA Annual General Meeting**
4:00 p.m. Olympic View Golf Club
TICKETS REQUIRED FOR
DINNER R.S.V.P. to STA office
23 *Victoria Day*