

Vernon Teachers' Association VOICES

Volume 69

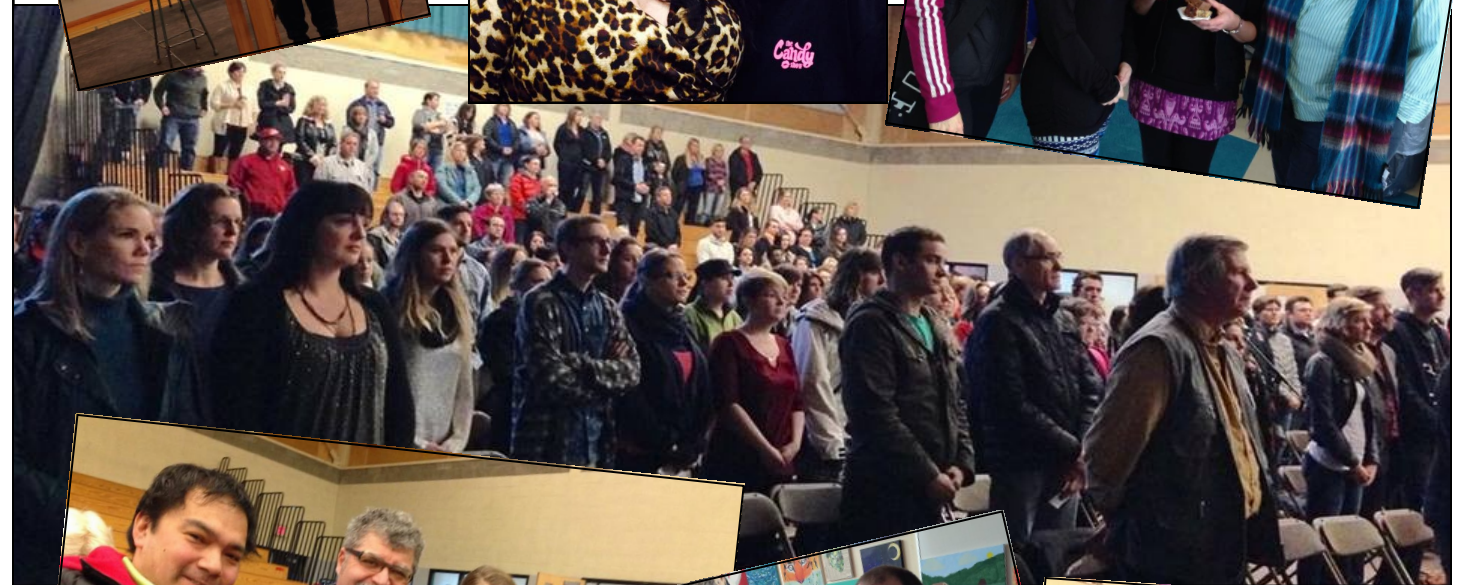
February 2015

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Professional Development — Learning and Enjoying! Okanagan Zone 2015



Speaking for Teachers in the North

Okanagan

Reflections.....

Greetings colleagues,

It is hard to believe that the February edition of Voices has rolled around - time seems to be flying by. In the busyness of our lives, teachers must remember to take care of themselves and the BCTF has two programs for teachers to help them do that.

Starling Minds is a program developed by Dr. Andrew Miki. He has partnered with the BCTF to offer teachers free access to an online mental fitness program (<http://www.bctf.ca/publications/NewsMagArticle.aspx?id=36082>). Members can sign up for the program at starlingminds.com. You do need your six digit BCTF ID number. If you don't know it, please call the BCTF at 1 800 663 9163 and ask for member records. The program is convenient and is specifically designed for teachers. Check it out.

Living with Balance is a program offered by Health and Wellness program. This six-week group program will provide opportunities for:

- education, self-evaluation, and examining the importance of maintaining life-style balance
- discussing the importance of nutrition; exercise; sleep
- managing symptoms of low mood, anxiety, and stress; boundaries and managing conflict
- learning strategies that increase awareness of factors that contribute to fluctuations in mood as well as methods to manage them
- reviewing proven techniques used to improve self-esteem and self-confidence, and manage stress and low mood
- defining what work-life balance means to each of us and what happens when our roles collide, having good boundaries is often attributed to having clear values
- discussing how to be intentional, creative and assertive when you need to be
- learning the importance of social connections and community in building long-term wellness, understanding that social isolation is a significant health risk factor.

If you have questions or are interested in this program, please let me know. We need a minimum of 10 participants for it to run.

Teaching is an important and rewarding profession. With the increasing demands on us, it is vital that we look after ourselves. Teachers often put the needs of others ahead of themselves and in this instance, put yourself first. Take some time to look after yourself and you will, in the long run, be better able to look after others.

Heather



Thanks go out to Craig Leverman for all that he did to organize the Winter Family Event! By all accounts everyone enjoyed 'Anne of Green Gables' as performed by the W.L. Seaton drama department. All of your efforts are greatly appreciated.!

VTA Executive and Members

VTA AGM — Monday, May 4th 2015

W.L Seaton Theatre

(Please note venue change from VSS)

◆ Election of VTA Executive for 2015/2016

The Officers of the Association, except for the President, Past President and the President of OCTAV shall be elected for a term of one year by secret ballot at the AGM. Nominations for all Officers up for election at the AGM may be received from the floor of the AGM or submitted to Richard Santos at rlsantos2001@gmail.com prior to May 4th.

As per the VTA Constitution nominations for President shall be made in writing and submitted to the Associations' office no later than **Monday, April 6th, 2015**. All candidates for the position of President shall submit a resume for publication along with their nomination. One day of paid release time will be provided for the qualified presidential candidates to visit the school sites prior to the election if they choose to do so.

A school based, secret ballot vote for the VTA President shall be held on Monday, April 20th, 2015, two weeks prior to the AGM. There will also be an advance poll and an election day poll set up at the VTA office to allow all Active Members who either cannot or who choose not to vote at the school based vote to vote in the election for the President.

◆ 2014/2015 Executive Annual Reports

◆ Adoption of 2015/2016 VTA Fees

◆ Constitution Amendments



Canadian Ski Patrol

The Canadian Ski Patrol, Information Night, Wednesday, February 25th, 6:30 PM at the **People Place**. Now recruiting volunteers for the 2015-16 Season @ Silver Star and Sovereign Lake. On-snow training begins March 14th. Go to **www.joinskipatrol.ca** to sign up for more information or call Gavin at 250-308-8256. Must be comfortable to ski or snowboard in all snow conditions down Black Diamond runs. All training provided.

Patrouille **canadienne** de ski

Brent N. Kisilevich, Patrol Leader (Volunteer)
Canadian Ski Patrol, Silver Star

email: csppatroll@gmail.com - phone: 250-545-2653 - cell: 250-550-4599

Occupational Health & Safety

New Study Finds One Sick Worker Could Infect Half the Workplace



Date First Published on OHS Insider: November 20th, 2014

Think it's no big deal if one worker comes into work despite being sick? Think again.

A [new study](#) by researchers from the University of Arizona found that just one worker who comes to work sick with the flu, a cold or a stomach bug can infect about half of the commonly touched surfaces in the workplace, setting the stage for multiple illnesses.

In the study, the researchers used a surrogate for the human nor virus and placed it on one to two commonly touched surfaces (such as door knobs or table tops) at the beginning of the day in office buildings, a conference room and a health care facility.

After various periods of time (two to eight hours), they sampled 60 to 100 surfaces capable of carrying infectious organisms, including light switches, bed rails, table tops, countertops, push buttons, coffee pots handles, sink tap handles, door knobs, phones and computer equipment.

The result: within two to four hours 40-60% of the surfaces sampled were contaminated with the virus. However, Charles Gerba, who presented the study at the 54th Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy, said there's a simple solution—use of disinfecting wipes and proper hand hygiene reduced the virus spread by 80-99%, he said.

“We really felt that the hand was quicker than the sneeze in the spread of disease,” said Gerba. “Most people think it's coughing and sneezing that spreads germs, but the number of objects you touch is incredible, especially in this push-button generation. We push more buttons than any other generation in history.”

So first [encourage workers to stay home if they're sick](#). If they come in anyway, have them reduce their ability to spread their illness via touching by advising them to frequently and properly [wash their hands](#) and to exercise [proper coughing etiquette](#).

Craig Leverman
VTA OH&S Chairperson





Social Justice Page

STUDENT PETITION: Kelsey Carlson, a Grade 12 Sardis Secondary student, has started an initiative to have a discrimination awareness unit added to the Planning 10 curriculum. By educating students on the harmful impact of hate speech and inequality in modern-day Canada, acts of discrimination could be reduced, allowing all students to learn and live a safer, more accepting environment. If you wish to support this initiative, please sign the petition at pagebc.ca.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - March 8th:

Resources for your classroom from the Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ) Status of Women Action Group can be found at BCTF. Lesson plans cover many topics and are for various grade levels.

Resources from International Women's Day 2015 website are available under this year's theme, Make It Happen. Check out events in Vernon.

Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: COPE378 is reaffirming its call for a national public inquiry into the shocking and tragic number of missing and murdered Aboriginal girls and women in Canada. Read more about the campaign on their website and sign a letter to **Stephen Harper**.

BCTF Workshops: There are new ones available: 'Youth Relationships in a Sexualized World' 'Responding to Racism Through ART and Ally building' and 'How To Be an Ally on LGBTQ issues'

Use any of these issues or one that you are passionate about as a jumping off point for your students to develop critical thinking skills, research skills and conflict resolution skills which promote an overall attitude of social justice.

Nancy Ingersoll, Sue Ghattas VTA Social Justice Reps



Chuckle of the Day.....

Teacher: " John, you know you can't sleep in my class"

John: " I know. But maybe if you were just a little quieter I could."

Teacher: "Why do you have a cotton ball in your ear? Do you have an infection?"

Student : "Well you keep saying that things go in one ear and out the other so I am trying to keep them it all in!

Teacher: You copied from Fred's exam paper didn't you ?

Pupil: How did you know ?

Teacher: Fred's paper says "I don't know" and you have put "Me, neither"!

The Vernon and District Suicide Prevention Committee presents

A Community Conversation on Suicide



This forum is an opportunity to have a conversation around suicide and how as a community we can best provide:

- ♦ *education and awareness*
- ♦ *support for those affected*
- ♦ *Prevention*

Guest Panel will include representatives from:

- ♦ *Mental Health*

o Adult & Child and Youth

- ♦ *RCMP*
- ♦ *Crisis Line*
- ♦ *Family Resource Centre*

When: Thursday, Mar. 12th, 2015 Time: 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Where: Vernon Lodge , 3914 – 32nd Street

Suicidal behaviour is complex. Risk factors vary with age, gender and ethnic group and may even change over time. The risk factors for suicide frequently occur in combination.

The taking of one's own life tragically demonstrates the psychological pain experienced by a person who has lost all hope, someone who is no longer able to cope with day to day activities, who feels there is no solution to their problem(s), a person who wants to end the pain by ending their life.

Everyone welcome ~ No Cost ~ Refreshments

Professional Development in SD.#22



Another Okanagan Zone Conference is in the books! I love this conference. For many reasons but mostly it's a collaborative effort between the Central Okanagan Teachers' Association and the Vernon Teachers' Association organizationally and financially. The COTA PD chair and I work together to build the day in the hope that it meets a wide variety of professional learning needs. It's a lot of work leading up and on the day (my FitBit tracked 15,000 steps!!) but worth it for the positive feedback we get every year.

This year we were proud to have Chief Dr. Robert Joseph who is a *Reconciliation Canada Ambassador*. In his talk, Chief Joseph shared his journey of reconciliation, including his childhood experience at St. Michael's Residential School. He spoke about the important role of reconciliation in moving forward through trauma and addressed the reconciliation work that is being done across Canada to build meaningful relationships among Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians.



We also brought in Candy Palmater. We knew that her unique ability to deliver a powerful key note speech would be one of a kind. Candy wove a personal tale that touched on gay rights, native rights, the profound influence of teachers, perseverance, and diversity. She is the creator and host of *The Candy Show*, in its 5th and final



season on APTN and she was shortlisted as the next host of the program "Q" on CBC Radio. Her session was funny and emotional and everyone in the room was moved.

The afternoon saw Dr. Art Hister give his message on living your best healthy life. We felt that his take on work/life balance, prevention, and the health of children was something teachers want and need to hear.

Whether you attended the conference or not, I sincerely hope that this past PD day was about your own professional learning journey.

Sincerely,

Robyn Ladner
PD Chair