



ARTS IN EDUCATION

N E W S L E T T E R

THE ARTS IN EDUCATION COUNCIL OF B.C.

Suite 201 - 3737 Oak Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 2M4

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SPRING 2000

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I see little of more importance to the future of our country and of civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist. If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him.

John F. Kennedy

Art at its most significant is a distant early warning system that can always be relied on to tell the old culture what is beginning to happen.

Marshall McLuhan

IS IT EDUCATION OR IS IT TRAINING?

The Debate Continues

Recent decisions in Alberta and Ontario to fund new post-secondary programs that focus on practical skills rather than liberal arts have once again pushed the Training vs Education argument to the fore. In our mad rush to embrace new technology (read "computers") as the solution to everything, the money seems to be on developing very specific "skill sets". Becoming "educated" has far too often come to mean taking the narrowest of paths towards a diploma or degree. First and second year requirements in most universities are no longer a balance of the sciences and the humanities. At the high school level, some students are even reluctant to read a book or take a course not strictly related to the final exams and that all-important grade point average.

Of course, we're not saying that getting good marks, getting into a good university or college and getting a good job are wrong-headed priorities; we are merely questioning a system that seems to dictate that the humanities, including the fine arts, be a frill, and not part of the real context of career-oriented education.

Government funding of "practical, skill-based" school and post-secondary programs is fine. Buying more computers for more elementary schools is fine, too. Computers are wonderful tools. However, when there is no money left for arts programs, we say "Stop and rethink this direction, before it's too late." Computer literacy is a must, but that other kind of literacy that involves culture and history and philosophy and imagination is equally important.

Read on, to hear what some others have had to say about this issue in the past month.

(continued on page 2)



IS IT EDUCATION OR IS IT TRAINING? *(continued from page 1)*

Linda Hutcheon, professor of English at the University of Toronto, is currently president of the Modern Language Association of America; she writes:

There is an important difference between education and training, but the truth is that students need both to cope with the world of the 21st century. Our universities and colleges must graduate educated, thoughtful and indeed ethical citizens as well as skilled ones.

In the humanities and social sciences, the emphasis is on educating people as cultural and historical beings who investigate the nature of our humanly created world: its social, economic, political, and cultural structures, its languages and literatures, its musical and visual arts, the events of its past and its systems of thought, both secular and religious.

The knowledge gained from these studies is to the advantage of Canadian society: As students learn to understand and respect others, both as individuals and as cultures, they are better able to function effectively as global citizens.

Canadians need to be "creative and innovative" as well as able to deal with information technology; they need independence of thought and what Northrop Frye called the "educated imagination." Skill sets such as those Premier Mike Harris champions are only part of the picture; those broader educational goals are also desirable in any informed and thoughtful Canadian citizen. Is that what Mr. Harris is afraid of?

Crawford Killian teaches communications at Capilano College in North Vancouver; he writes:

Having happily taught workplace-writing courses in B.C. colleges since 1967, I should be cheered by the Ontario Premier's plan to spend more on job-related programs while leaving the liberal arts to stagnate. It's always smart to invest where you get the greatest return. But Mr. Harris's plan isn't going to work quite as profitably as he hopes.

Starting in the 1980's, the workplace began to demand higher skill levels of our community-college graduates. Students fresh out of high school found they couldn't qualify for immediate entry into early childhood education or marketing. They couldn't get in, in part, because they were competing against students with bachelor's and even master's degrees. Maybe the liberal-arts education of these students hadn't taught them employable skills, but their sheer literacy and maturity made them quick and motivated learners with a real competitive edge. The idea of shunting students into a pure career track, with every course focused on the workplace, is actually counterproductive and likely to lower career-program standards.

Money pumped into high-tech programs will never

be enough and will often be wasted because the faculty and staff aren't adequately trained to use computers. If Mike Harris had only taken a liberal-arts education, he might have read Charles Dickens and learned about Mr. Gradgrind - the fact-obsessed, inately practical educator who knew that a horse is a gaminivorous quadruped, but didn't know anything else.

(Both of these excerpts appeared in the *Globe and Mail*, March 2, 2000.) In an article entitled "Computer fetishism is rampant. Oh the humanities!" (The *Vancouver Courier*, March 5, 2000), Greg Felton laments the "unnatural emphasis" placed on computer training in our schools. Felton talks about Earl Shorris, the founder of the Clemente Course in the U.S., upon which is based U.B.C.'s "Humanities 101", aimed at low-income, Downtown Eastside Vancouver residents. "Shorris' guiding principle is that an education in the humanities - philosophy, the classics, literature, art - opens the door to an active political life, the lack of which keeps people trapped in poverty."

"In (a) Vancouver speech," writes Felton, "Shorris expressed the value of his program in this perfect phrase: 'Rich people get educated, but poor people get trained.'"

Felton goes on to say, "Never has the shortcomings of our fixation with computers been put into such sharp focus."

Like Humanities 101, our public school system is also designed to create citizens, though over a much longer period. Unfortunately, a fetish for high technology-driven learning has placed an unnatural emphasis on computer training - training that comes at the cost of education.

Strange as it may seem, teachers over the centuries have educated children without Bill Gates, IBM or the Internet. Computers weren't needed to teach philosophy, art, language, music, history, literature or science, yet now we're supposed to believe that children, even elementary school children, need to learn on computers to get ahead in life.

The idea that computers can substantially improve education and make our children learn faster is patently ludicrous and more than a little bit dangerous. The amount of time a child spends logging on, downloading, and staring at a screen is time lost to developing the mind and becoming a citizen. Computer learning is passive and requires little imagination, no matter how interactive a program may be. It's also expensive, which invites all sorts of disquieting discussion about the priorities and value of public education.

What do you think? This is a sensitive issue, and we would very much like to hear the opinions of our readers out there in schools. Please write us!

A JOB WELL DONE

Pats and pans from Morag Cuthbertson, at the BCMEA's annual conference, held February 17-19, 2000

Congratulations are due to the organizers of this year's highly successful BCMEA conference, Regenesys, held in the handsome new McMath Secondary School in Steveston. Equally impressive were the excellent student helpers, a credit to themselves and to the school. As always, the only problem was in choosing one session over another. A week would have been required to take in all the treats just waiting to be savoured, had they not been concurrent.

For me, the highlight was the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Willie Hill, whose topic was advocacy. It was just made for me, if not for the many who impolitely, if understandably, left in the middle. His information provided me with two pages of notes which I will share at another time.

How good it was to learn, at Anne Hill's session, that the K to 7 Curriculum Guide is now in every school. That's a good beginning, but prompts me to consider the next stages. First I wonder who will do the teaching. It seems that the classroom teacher is expected to. How realistic is this? I know from first hand experience that language arts takes up eighty percent of both classroom and after school planning time in the primary years, where it should all begin. Then comes Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts, math, science, socials, and the myriad psychological and social concerns of the students.

Most teachers have some training and background in the so-called core subjects, but, as products of the system they have little or nothing in the arts. Even when they do, as in my own case, we are only human and there are just so many hours in the day and days in the week and the arts get short changed, even with the best will in the world. This is not to say that I believe that the arts must be left to specialists; not at all. We have found that classroom

generalists can be helped and encouraged to some extent with Visual Arts and Drama, though Music is another story, and Dance remains to be seen. Specialists are desperately needed to come into the classroom once a week to demonstrate and set up the daily music lesson which the classroom generalist can then maintain till the next session.

This leads us to the problem of funding. Parents and administrators cannot continue to dump every darn solution to the social ills of the day on schools, not when research has shown so very clearly for so long the immense benefits accruing from sound arts instruction, and the earlier the better. I was glad that the teachers present at this session had the much needed opportunity to vent their frustrations, but I do feel concern that it mostly centered on the lack of good instruments. Till budgets balloon again, I would urge everyone to use that wonderful instrument that we all have gratis, namely the human voice. What astonishing music it can produce and what great skill building we can impart using it alone. All we really need are teachers and students while we work towards procuring external instruments.

One relatively inexpensive product that was on display and which could do so very much to enhance the aesthetic sense and inform the mind of the child was the Brummitt-Taylor Music Listening Program: A Non-Directed Approach. A product of Dave Brummitt's experiences in Langley and Karen Taylor's wide knowledge and requiring only five minutes a day of school time, the effect it has can only be described as magical.

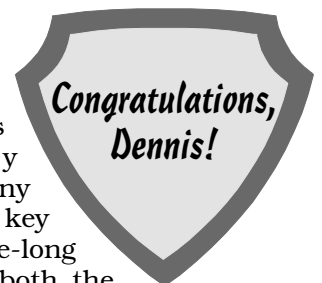
Of course the best part of any conference is reuniting with old colleagues and discovering, to my delight, former students who are now the clinicians and frontline troops. Greetings and thanks to all.

READIN', WRITIN' AND RACHMANINOFF

Wayne Wang, a 17-year old student at Langley Fine Arts School, extolled the virtues of the School in an interview on CBC's *North by Northwest*, on March 4, 2000. An accomplished pianist, he has several public concerts in his resume, including a performance with the Victoria Symphony (playing the "Rach 2"). In talking to host, David Grierson, Wayne said that the teachers and the principal understand the importance of music in his life, and respect his need for time to practice. As well, "there is great peer support ... in a fine arts school. It is nice to be with others who look to the arts as a career," said Wayne. By attending the Langley Fine Arts School, he has been able to achieve a balance between music and other school work ... with some time left over to play in a jazz combo!

AWARD FOR DENNIS TUPMAN

Arts in Education Council's Board Member, Dennis Tupman, was recently honoured at a special ceremony at Government House, for his key role as an educator with a life-long commitment to advocacy for both the arts and the importance of the arts to a complete education. The citation was part of B.C. Arts and Culture Week last fall. Well-known to everyone in arts education in the province, and the country, as a former arts coordinator with the Vancouver School Board, music educator and arts advocate without equal, Dennis seems to be busier than ever since his "retirement"! Congratulations, Dennis!



HELP CREATE A K-12 FINE ARTS SCHOOL FOR VANCOUVER

An open letter from Russell Stephens, Vancouver Parents for Arts in Education

It is our wish to establish a public Fine Arts School in Vancouver modeled upon the successful example of the Langley Fine Arts School. We believe our community would embrace such an arts oriented institution, and that its creation is long overdue.

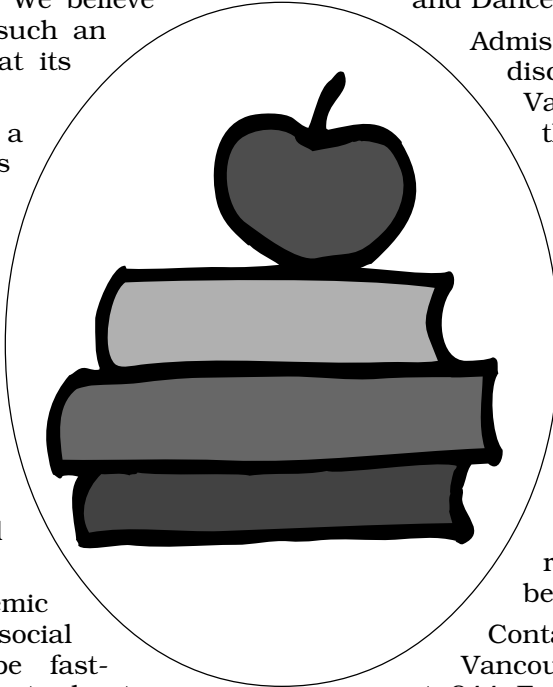
It is our belief that students with a passion for the arts have needs that may not be met by traditional school settings. These needs include a program that provides a sequential Fine Arts curriculum to promote continuous skill development and to enhance the capacity for creative expression. Accordingly, the Fine Arts School we are proposing would follow the BC school curriculum for both elementary and secondary schools.

However, more traditional academic studies such as mathematics, social studies, and science would be fast-tracked to allow the students time to devote to studying the arts. The six Fine Arts subjects which would be included as equal partners in our

curriculum are: Theatre, Music, Creative Writing, Fine Arts, Optical Arts (photography, film and video), and Dance.

Admission school policies would be non-discriminatory and open to all Vancouver students. The size and the location of the school would be worked out in cooperation with the School Board based upon demonstrated community demand. It should be pointed out that we are not asking for new or extra funding. Our children are currently students in the Vancouver School district, and as such already have funds allotted by the provincial government for their education. We are merely asking that current resources be reallocated in a new, and we believe, exciting way.

Contact Russell Stephens at the Vancouver Fine Arts School by mail at 844 East 22nd Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5V 1V7, phone: (604) 875-6687, or by email: VancouverFineArts@Hotmail.com.



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SUMMER 2000

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"The very best engineers and technical designers in the Silicon Valley are, nearly without exception, practising musicians."

— from *The Paradox of the Silicon Savior*
by G. VENERABLE

High-Tech CEO's Say Value of Liberal Arts Increasing

by Dennis F. Tupman

As we know, there is almost a societal hysteria at the moment about the necessity to have our children versed in all aspects of the computer in order to be with it in the job market. I am not suggesting that using and understanding high-tech and computers are not important. I am, however, calling for a more balanced approach to implementation of technical studies than what I perceive is happening in many instances. Research has shown a lot of what we are doing in computer studies, especially at the lower grades, is not useful, particularly when it is done at the expense of more hands-on activity such as the arts.



As a result of this preoccupation with things high-tech, the liberal arts, the fine arts, and the humanities - and even the sciences (not to mention Technical and Domestic Studies) have taken a hit in many of our programs and districts. Capital funding and even use of school discretionary staffing time have been directed in increasingly large measure toward high-tech learning outcomes. Ministries of Education have often called the shots on this focus. For over a decade now many school board capital budgets have been almost exclusively dedicated to purchase of the latest model of computer and related software. And we know of the rapid obsolescence of these items.



In all this hype there seems a need for curricular balance. Help is on the way ...

(continued on page 2)

HIGH-TECH CEO'S SAY VALUE OF LIBERAL ARTS INCREASING *(continued from page 1)*

Recently, there was a statement (released in April 2000) from a think tank involving 30 top Canadian high-tech CEO's. They were calling for a more balanced approach in schools and universities, that would enhance the role of the liberal arts, the arts, and humanities and even the pure sciences, as well as dealing with tech studies. This is the kind of education and training these CEO's want in their prospective employees, it is reported in this statement.

The cry for balance in education from this high-tech interest group bears reprinting. They are not alone. As early as 1997, Neil Postman, eminent media commentator and critic, also rang alarm bells about the degree to which we have marginalized the arts, the liberal arts and humanities, and even the sciences in our attempt to cope with the high-tech juggernaut. At a recent media conference, Postman said, "I thought that television would be the last great technology that people would go into with their eyes closed. Now you have the computer."

Clifford Stoll, a Silicon Valley insider, states in his book

called *Silicon Snake Oil*, that in the high-tech industry there is a need for creativity, inferential and divergent thinking, and emotional intelligence, and other personal qualities, all of which are cultivated in the arts.

So we as arts educators are receiving a lot of affirmation from many quarters. It is incumbent, however, that we view critically what we are doing, that we are reflecting on our practice and connecting with the mainstream of education. The eminent Canadian educational leaders, Michael Fullan and David Hargreaves, urge us to reflect on ourselves and our practice.

One caution. Let us make sure that our arts courses focus on the essentials - the basics - of the respective art and not on the trivial. Courses that are more entertaining than rigorous, more immediately gratifying than providing sequenced instruction in the essentials of the respective art, will ultimately shortchange our kids.

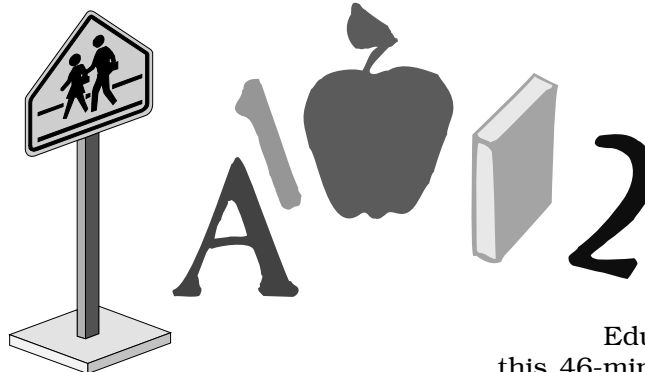
To receive a copy of the CEO's statement directly, email to dtpascott@actnet.com.

ALPHABET ROAD: THE MOVIE

A unique, collaborative and imaginative project at Henderson Elementary School in Powell River has now been beautifully documented for all to see and use. *Alphabet Road* is the story of a remarkable mural, fifty-two feet by ten, created by the students, staff and community of this small school on the west coast. In the works of the accompanying Teacher's Guide, *Alphabet Road* "is rooted in teachers' powerful beliefs about the nature of art, learning and teaching." In her "Rationale for Integrated Arts Education", in the Teacher's Guide, intermediate teacher Wendy Halliday says:

Art surrounds children whether it be the animation and graphics of television, sports, logos, furniture, or the buildings they frequent. It expresses the values of their particular time and place. However, it is a language that cannot be fully comprehended without guidance. To grow up in a culture of two languages, verbal and visual, where only one is understood, hints at a richness lost. Art, at the very least, intensifies the enjoyment of life. As educators, we can provide the means for children to access a lifelong pleasure.

Teachers understand that education is more than an introduction to the work force or the preparation of children for jobs, many of which do not yet exist. At the same time we are keenly aware of a



core group of skills that all children need for a productive future. The Fine Arts can play an important role in learning and practicing the true "basics": critical thinking, problem solving and interpersonal skills.

Members of the Arts in Education Council have viewed this 46-minute video and can say that it is fresh and immediate, with good visuals, some original and appealing music and a real sense of the spirit of community that so characterizes ventures like this. It's also very inspiring!

To order the video and Teacher Guide, write Video at School District #47, 4351 Ontario Avenue, Powell River, B.C. V8A 1V3. Cost is as follows: Video - \$29.95; Teacher Guide - \$9.95; Alphabet Road Bundle (video, guide and unlimited duplicating rights) - \$169.95.

For more information, contact:

Julia Griffith
Henderson Elementary School
5506 Willow Street
Powell River, B.C. V8A 4P4

Telephone (604) 483-9162
Fax (604) 483-3272

email: jgriffith@sd47.bc.ca
website: www.prcn.org/alphabetroad

NEW BOOKLETS AND BROCHURES

Bright Lights, a recent Ministry publication, features seventeen B.C. elementary schools where innovative teaching and excitement about learning have created a vibrant and productive atmosphere. Henderson School's *Alphabet Road* (profiled in this newsletter) is one example used to show how "fine arts helps make bright futures."



Bright Lights was distributed to all elementary schools in B.C. Additional copies may be obtained by calling 1-888-876-1166. The secondary school version of the same booklet was published last year and may also be obtained through this number. Or, both are available online at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/brightlights.

Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design has produced a very useful brochure/poster, entitled **Careers in Art**, for the Ministry of Education. The publication, which was compiled and designed by ECIAD students, lists all B.C. institutes and programs for post-secondary education in the arts, with detailed contact information. Some useful websites gleaned from the poster include:

www.aett.gov.bc.ca/postsecguide

<http://cne.eciad.bc.ca/careers>

www.pas.bc.ca

www.ceiss.org

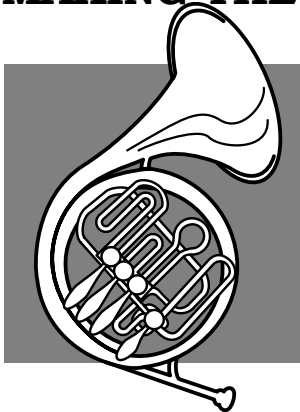
To obtain a copy of the poster, call the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology, in Vancouver at (604) 895-5068; Fax: (604) 895-5059.

CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR ARTS EDUCATION

Over several years, the Canadian Conference of the Arts has been working with other national cultural organizations and institutions and the University of Ottawa to develop teacher training programs in the arts. As a result, the Canadian Institute for Arts Education was launched this year - an organization to support and further this work, and to conduct and collect research on teacher education in the arts. In this its first year, the new organization will present *Summer Break with the Arts in the Nation's Capital* - two unique opportunities in arts education for teachers. In Ottawa, July 10 to 28, teachers will work with professional artists in the creative spaces of the National Arts Centre, the National Gallery and the Canadian Museum of Civilization to explore ways and means of teaching in and through the arts: "The Integrated Arts" - a professional development course which leads to an Ontario Additional Qualification (AQ) certification; or "Teaching and Learning in the Fine Arts" - a Masters of Education course which leads to an MEd credit. The blend of artists, cultural spaces, warm July weather along the Canal, and a city full of summer festivals and art, provides an easy and agreeable context for earning teaching qualifications - and makes this a unique "Summer Break"! For more information and registration details, contact Michael Wilson by telephone (613) 562-5800, ext. 4155; by Fax (613) 562-5146; or by email: mpwilson@uottawa.ca.



MAKING THE CASE FOR MUSIC EDUCATION



Arts in education supporters are often called upon to justify their views with "hard evidence". The Coalition of Music Education in B.C. (cme) uses its website to provide well-documented research studies that demonstrate the value of music as part of a balanced curriculum. The cme is "a non-profit society made up of parents,

educators and business people from varying walks of life whose mission is to protect and promote public school music education in B.C." Their website is at www.BCMusicCoalition.org.

For ammunition, supporting all arts disciplines in our school system, ArtStarts, themselves at

www.artstarts.com, have published a wonderful list of internet resources, including:

www.theargonaut.com/artseducation.htm - Canadian site, comprehensive in its links to hundreds of arts in education advocacy sites

www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org - Kennedy Center's national arts education network; resources links, lesson plans, curriculum planning information

www.aaae.org - Association for the Advancement of Arts Education

www.newhorizons.org/ofc_cabc.html - part of the New Horizons for Learning website, a leading-edge resource for educational change

www.ecna.org/nca/lords2.htm - National Campaign for the Arts, articles on the value of arts for children from this UK advocacy group

WORLD ARTS SUMMIT: A BIG EVENT

The Canada Council for the Arts will host the World Summit on the Arts and Culture, an international conference of national arts councils and other cultural institutions, in Ottawa, December 1-3, 2000.

The Summit will lay the groundwork for establishing an ongoing network of national arts councils and may identify specific projects for continued international collaboration. The Canada Council for the Arts has undertaken this initiative in the belief that many of the challenges faced by artists, creators, arts organizations and national arts councils should be addressed in cooperation with the larger international community.

The event is intended to bring together a wide range of individuals and institutions to address some common challenges and opportunities for the arts in the next century. Over the course of the three-day Summit, participants will address a number of key issues such as:

- ◆ audience development for the performing arts
- ◆ the intellectual property rights of creators in electronic media
- ◆ the development of foreign audiences for artistic talent
- ◆ fostering diversity in a global world
- ◆ the arts for young audiences

Invitations are being extended to national arts councils in over 50 countries, to organizations and institutions from another 25 nations, to Canadian

provincial arts councils and national arts service organizations, and to multilateral bodies such as UNESCO, the Organization of American States and the Council of Europe.



For further information about the World Summit, contact Keith Kelly, Director, Planning and Research at the Canada Council by phone at (613) 566-4414, ext. 5201 or email: keith.kelly@canadacouncil.ca.

COUNCIL NEWS

The extensively crunched and tabulated, graphed and pie-charted results of our survey of high school students regarding the Fine Arts 11 graduation requirement are now printed and coil-bound and ready for distribution. Copies are \$12 each (covering printing, binding and mailing), and may be ordered from Pat Hindmarch-Watson at (604) 228-9589; Fax (604) 228-8443; email phw@axionet.com

A second, improved questionnaire is being circulated to a selection of schools this month. Inevitably, when surveys are returned, some of the answers reveal ambiguities in our questions! So, Questionnaire #2 reflects some subtle changes which will make tabulation of the results simpler and faster.

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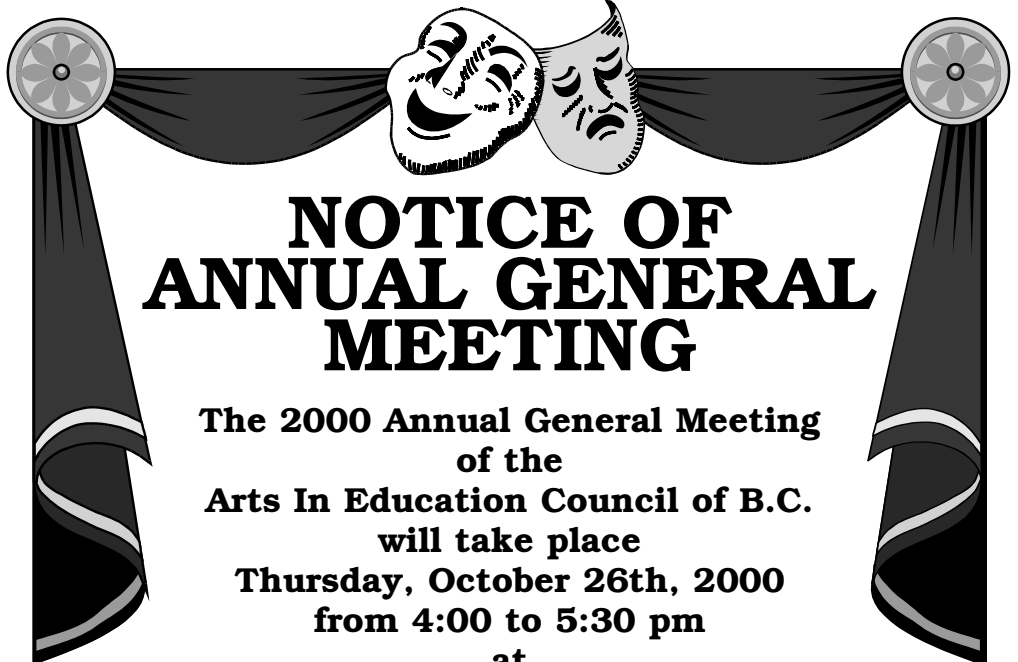
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*"In any ideal system
of education, we
should educate the
senses, and to this
end, each of the arts
should have its
appropriate place in
the curriculum."*

- SIR HERBERT READ



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The 2000 Annual General Meeting
of the
Arts In Education Council of B.C.
will take place
Thursday, October 26th, 2000
from 4:00 to 5:30 pm
at
Henry Hudson Elementary School
1551 Cypress Street
Vancouver**

**(Please enter School from the
York Street Daycare Entrance,
as other doors are locked after 3:00pm)**

**The program will feature a showing of the video
"Alphabet Road" which documents a unique,
collaborative and imaginative mural project
at Powell River's Henderson School.**

**4:00 Refreshments
4:15 Video and Discussion
5:15 Annual General Meeting**

EVERYONE WELCOME

For information, call: 228-9589

PLEASE NOTE!

The new address of the Arts in Education Council of B.C. is:

P.O. Box 62023, Arbutus R.P.O.

#143 - 4255 Arbutus Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1Z1

COUNCIL NEWS

Some Goodbyes

This summer, very reluctantly, the Arts in Education Council Board of Directors accepted the resignation of **Jean Cunningham**. Jean has been a stalwart member, almost from the inception of the Council in the 1970's. For many of those years, she served as president. For her entire working life, and indeed into her "retirement" years, Jean has stressed the great value of the arts in the education system.

Born in Zanzibar to British parents, Jean was sent back to England, to boarding school, at the tender age of three. Upon leaving school, she gained her qualification in physical education, taught in Britain and then in Jamaica. Jean came to B.C. In the early '60s, when her late husband, Alan, was hired to head up the history department at the newly opened Simon Fraser University. Initially she taught in the SFU Faculty of Education, then in the same capacity at UBC, and eventually established herself in the School of Physical Education. It was here that her arts advocacy really began to assert itself.

In Jean's words, "Dance education at UBC was a disgrace!" She went to the new head of Phys Ed, and told him so. "I really wasn't looking for a new job," said Jean, "so I was startled when he asked me to put together a good dance programme in Phys Ed." After some initial trepidation, she designed four courses, three of them a blend of theory and practice, and the fourth, "dance in society", a look at dance in the wider world.

Her account of introducing dance to a class of "mostly guys" is hilarious. "I taught it in a choreographic mode, in such a way that the students were given a problem to solve by way of movement, in a dance composition. At first, this provoked rolling eyes and intakes of breath, and then silence. However, by the fourth or fifth session, something miraculous had happened, and enthusiasm took over.

Some of Jean's most rewarding experiences have involved seeing what is actually happening in dance in the schools. She has been asked to observe on many occasions; considerable time was spent in Delta, where that school board asked her to teach a

term course. As well, she was delighted to act as Senior Supervisor for two teachers, Aileen Neale and Claude Dionne, completing their Masters theses in dance education.

In the 1980's she became very interested in Indian classical dance, particularly as it related to the immigrant experience in Canada. This became the subject of her doctoral thesis. To this day, Jean teaches Indian classical dance, "without the deep knee bends", to a class of about 80 students, assembled in a temple loft every Saturday. As well, for the past five years, she has been a volunteer for the Jennifer Mascall Dance Company, advising, helping with administrative detail and, of course, attending every performance. She says, "Thanks to the arts, and dance, my career didn't come to a grinding halt when I retired from UBC."

Jean Cunningham is an inspiration to us all. We'll miss her and wish her well in all her future endeavours.



Janet Lee, who has been on the Council's Board of Directors for more than a decade, is also leaving this fall. Janet is a mainly self-taught multimedia artist, photographer and paper maker who manages to work at a day job (with her husband in their environmental consulting company), raise a family, organize community arts events and pursue her own creative ideas. We feel very fortunate that she has had time to serve on the Board and, for the last few years, assist with the Newsletter. She has been a regular participant in "Artists in our Midst", an annual Vancouver event, where the public can visit artists in their studios or homes, in their neighbourhoods. Last year, Janet originated "Art in the Garden", in her own garden, where a number of artists assembled to exhibit and sell their works. This year, Starbucks provided the coffee, and a donation box was dedicated to the Arts in Education Council! Janet is full of imaginative ideas and her lively contributions will be greatly missed at our meetings.

Some "Hellos", We Hope!

The loss of Jean and Janet has made us very aware of our great **need for new Board Members**. This is a heartfelt appeal for arts in education advocates who might have a little time to devote to a unique non-profit, no-strings-attached organization dedicated to promoting more arts in the school system, K to 12. Ideally, we'd like to see some practising teachers who can tell us what it's really like out there in the

trenches; right now, we have one – Ron Rumak – who teaches art, amongst other things. It would be lovely to also have drama, dance and music represented. As well, help is needed with this newsletter. The time commitment is **not** huge - we meet no more than once a month, in a central location, for no more than two hours. **Please call us, and come to the AGM on October 26th.** (See Page 1 for details).

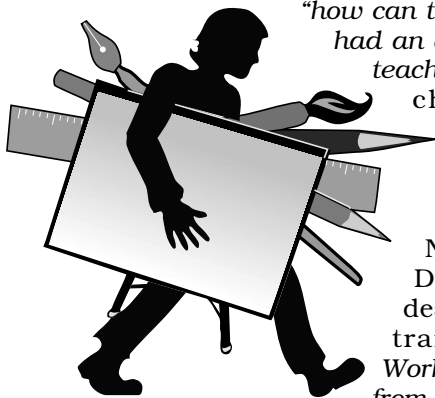
“SHARING THE VISION”

Sharing the Vision, the 4th National Symposium on Arts Education, cohosted in Ottawa by the Canadian Conference of the Arts and the University of Ottawa (July 2-4), was an opportunity to build bridges within the Canadian arts education Community. Participants included artists, teachers, education and arts administrators, university professors, researchers, government officials and students, and hailed from every province and the Yukon territory. They explored both the teaching of art and the teaching of the teachers; keeping the arts and the teacher specialists in our schools, and how governments can help. Some highlights, as reported in *Blizzart*, the magazine of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, include:

Teaching Teachers in and Through the Arts

In this workshop, panelists were asked the question, “How do you train generalist teachers to teach the arts and what role do artists have in this?” With a strong warning to avoid systemizing the methods of teaching and making art, artist and U. of Laval Professor Francine Chaine pressed for humanity, sensitivity and a sense of humour in teaching teachers. Ontario teacher Jane Cutler asked the fundamental question:

“how can teachers who have never had an artistic experience really teach art?” - this is the challenge faced by Ontario elementary teachers undertaking delivery of the new Ontario curriculum. Nova Scotia artist Deborah Hickman described her teacher training program *Art Works* which “uses arts from the inside out”.



Keeping Specialist Arts Teachers in our Elementary Schools

The importance of providing students with consistent, sequential, continuous, and developmentally appropriate arts programs in the schools was reinforced by panellists. A strong sense of partnership building between generalist teachers and specialists was a recurring theme. Some recommendations by the panel:

- ◆ barriers need to be broken down between generalist teachers, arts specialists, artists, administrators and the community as all have important roles to play in delivering effective arts education;
- ◆ arts educators in the broadest sense need to take responsibility for their professional roles and articulate the nature of what they do and what others might do to help – they must be pro-active in seeking out partnerships, they must be more affirmative; and

- ◆ stakeholders must identify and articulate the barriers that prevent schools from having arts specialists in their schools, and then seek to remove these barriers.

Teacher/Artist Partnerships in the Classroom

This workshop explored the many avenues for cooperation in bringing the wider world of the arts into the classroom. Two general recommendations:

- ◆ that there be ongoing support for professional development for artists working in schools and for teachers working with artists; and
- ◆ that closer connections be made with decision makers (principals, school boards, departments of education and culture) to increase their awareness of the importance of arts education.

How Governments Can Support the Education and Culture Sectors

In summing up this workshop, Moderator Dr. Stephen Elliott, Professor of Education at Queen’s University, focused on the attention given to “getting to the souls” of leading bureaucrats and administrators as an essential step in effecting change among the attitudes of decision makers. “We need active and sustained lobbying to capture the imagination of politicians”. Some recommendations from this workshop:

- ◆ more funding for professional development and resources for arts teachers and generalist teachers in the arts;
- ◆ building of partnerships to broaden the resource base for arts education; attendance of arts education representatives at an upcoming meeting of the Ministers of Culture; and
- ◆ use of professional lobbyists to reach Ministers of Culture and Education and organizations such as the Conference Board of Canada.



National symposiums such as “*Sharing the Vision*” enable participants to take home some new “ammunition”, reaffirm their passion for the arts in education, and to “build bridges” with arts education programs across Canada such as *Learning Through the Arts*, Calgary Arts Partners in Education Society (CAPES), *ArtsSmarts*, *Dare Arts*, the 4C’s in Halifax, and our own *ArtStarts* in B.C. More will be heard on the publication of a *National Agenda for Arts Education in Canadian Schools* and artists and educators will be named to the ongoing structure of the National Advisory Board as it assumes responsibilities. Until the next Symposium, www.artsed.ca will be the ongoing forum for discussion and “sharing the vision” of arts education in Canada.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 20, 2000

DANCE CONFERENCE 2000

presented by the B.C. Dance Educators' Association
at Carson Graham Secondary School
2145 Jones Avenue
North Vancouver

Keynote address by Anne Hill, Ministry of Education.

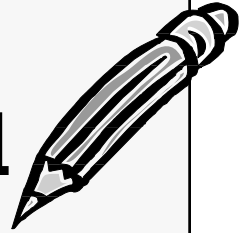
Active sessions:

all levels of experience welcome; from modern,
to jazz to African to computer choreography.

INFO: Call Linda Medland 986-0644.



The Final Word



*“The arts are
fundamental
resources through
which the
world is viewed,
meaning is created,
and the
mind is developed.”*

– ELLIOT W. EISNER,
Professor of
Education and Art,
Stanford University



February 15-17, 2001

ART ODYSSEY 2001:

The Changing Vision of Art Education,
the B.C. Art Teachers Association
Annual Conference, Kelowna, B.C.

Mark your calendar now.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pat Hindmarch-Watson, Chairperson

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ARTS IN EDUCATION

N E W S L E T T E R

ARTS IN EDUCATION COUNCIL OF B.C.

P.O. Box 62023, Arbutus R.P.O.

#143 - 4255 Arbutus Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1Z1

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WINTER 2000

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NEWSLETTER

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“Arts
education...
ought to give
pride of place
to those unique
contributions
that only the
arts make
possible...”

- ELLIOT EISNER

The Arts Education Argument

Readers of arts education journals will have noticed a little storm brewing between those who believe in the intrinsic value of the arts and those who believe in promoting, promoting, promoting the ways in which the arts enhance results in a variety of other school subjects. It's the “arts for art's sake”, or not, all over again. Apparently, with diminishing budgets for arts in the schools, we're only too happy to grasp at any evidence, however anecdotal, to support our case for the arts!



Every arts educator worth the title can summon up a dozen or more ways in which the arts enhance other education outcomes. There are hundreds of studies purporting to prove the value of the arts in boosting performance in everything from math skills to good behaviour. Some of the more acclaimed studies have gained wide attention: the “Mozart effect”, for example, or Frances Raucher's work at the University of California, or the LTRTA (Learning to



(continued on page 2)

THE ARTS EDUCATION ARGUMENT (continued from page 1)

Read Through the Arts) programs of the '70s and '80s in the U.S. We have all been very happy to have this ammunition in our arsenal.

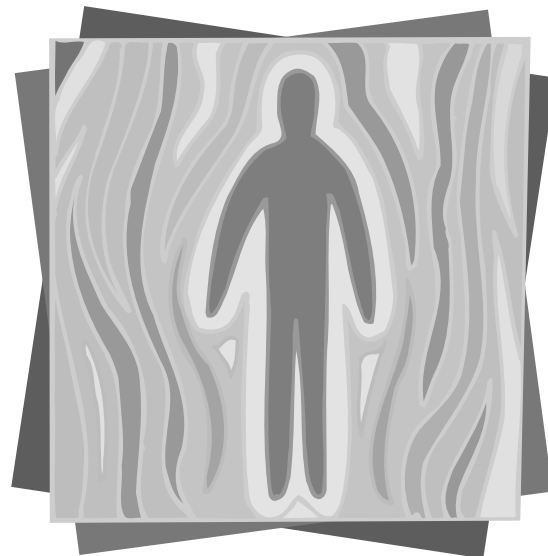
However, in the last couple of years, there have been words of caution from some very big names. **Elliot Eisner** and **Howard Gardner** are instantly recognizable, but other scholars of arts education policy are also adding their concern, that by promoting the arts as a means to an end, we betray them.

In an article entitled *Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement* (*Arts Policy Review*, September/October 1998), Eisner says:

My claim, at base, is that arts education and the several art fields that constitute it ought to give pride of place to those unique contributions that only the arts make possible, that when justifications for art education that are not distinctive become primary, the place of arts education in our schools and their potential contribution to the student's education is compromised.

Eisner poses the question "How does one justify arts education without using an ancillary rationale?" His answer is "to look to the arts themselves and to ask about the demands they make on those who would create, perceive, or understand them." He identifies four outcomes:

1. Students should acquire a feel for what it means to transform their ideas, images, and feelings into an art form.
2. Arts education should refine the student's awareness of the aesthetic qualities in art and life.
3. Arts education should enable students to



understand that there is a connection between the content and form that the arts display and the culture and time in which the work was created.

4. Arts education should involve dispositional outcomes such as:
 - a willingness to imagine possibilities that are not now, but which might become.
 - a desire to explore ambiguity, to be willing to forestall premature closure in pursuing resolutions.
 - the ability to recognize and accept the multiple perspectives and resolutions that work in the arts celebrate.

Concluding his argument, Eisner says:

We do the arts no service when we try to make their case by touting their contributions to other fields. When such contributions become priorities, the arts become handmaidens to ends that are not distinctively artistic and in the process undermine the value of art's unique contributions to the education of the young.

In a keynote address to a conference on music education in the U.S. in 1999, **Howard Gardner** says much the same thing:

(T)here are numbers of people nowadays who have a dream that music in particular, the arts in general, can be ensconced in the curriculum because of benefits they have that are 'extra-artistic.' So, there's the notion that

(continued on page 3)

THE ARTS EDUCATION ARGUMENT (continued from page 2)

involvement in music can make you smarter.

Another idea is if you engage in the arts such as music, it will make you more creative in business, in science, in your love life, whatever. Another idea is that if you study music or an art form, you will learn how to think critically, and you'll be a better critical thinker in English, history, and so on.

My problem with this line of argument is that people who live by instrumental arguments risk *dying* by them, because if you say the reason to teach music is to make people better in math, and it turns out that it *doesn't* make people better in math, then you have a real problem in continuing to teach music. Or if you say, well, that music will make you five times better in math, and it turns out that joining the army will make you seven times better in math (I think they're equally improbable) then people will say, 'Join the army instead, don't play music.'

And so, I think it's extremely important for those of us who *do* favor arts education not to pitch our disciplinary fate to an uncertain guarantor, because if that guarantor fails us, then essentially, we will have marginalized the reasons for any kind of art education, including music education.

Another argument is that we have potentials in our minds, and in our brains to develop artistic intelligence, and people have a right to have those potentials developed, even if they don't make us better in science. As my colleague Jessica Davis always says, 'nobody justifies mathematics education because it will make you better in *music*.'

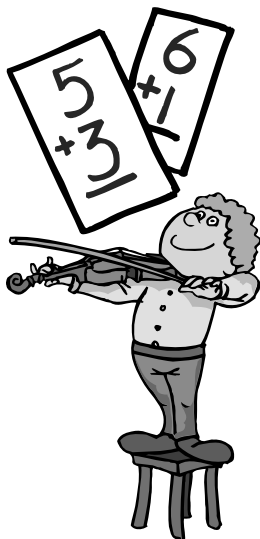
In an article entitled "Mute Those Claims: No Evidence (Yet) for a Causal Link between Arts Study and Academic Achievement" (*Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol.34, Nos.3-4, Fall/Winter 2000), **Ellen Winner** and **Monica Cooper** analyze the primary research testing the claim that study of the arts is associated with improved academic outcomes. In an exhaustive look at all relevant studies from 1950 to 1998, they conclude that so

far, there is no proof that arts education *causes* academic skills to improve. They say

It is certainly possible that studying the arts leads to the development of cognitive skills that in turn lead to heightened achievement in academic areas. It is also possible that studying the arts leads to greater engagement in school, which in turn leads to greater academic achievement. But these studies do not allow us to rule out a causal relationship in the opposite direction: high academic achievers may choose to study the arts.

The authors acknowledge as valid some of the "motivational" arguments (the arts foster self-confidence, perseverance, collaboration and bonding, etc.) and the defense that the arts develop cognitive skills such as focusing, close observation, critical, divergent or independent thinking, problem solving and problem finding. However, Winner and Cooper want proof of a *causal relationship* and they stress, like Eisner, that "the arts deserve a justification on their own grounds, and advocates should refrain from making utilitarian arguments in favour of the arts. As soon as we justify arts by their power to affect learning in an academic area, we make the arts vulnerable."

Well, this debate will go on forever. Ask anybody in the larger arena of national cultural policy where the huge economic contribution of the arts must always be cited. We'd all like the arts to be valued for their own sakes, but when they are being squeezed out of the system at an alarming rate, we tend to clutch at any argument, however anecdotal. What do you think? Are Eisner and others splitting hairs, or are we really losing sight of the real core value of arts education? In the next newsletter, we'll look at some educators who argue passionately for the other side.



COUNCIL NEWS

At its 2000 Annual General Meeting, held October 26th, the Arts in Education Council of B.C. elected its Board of Directors for the coming year, as follows:

Pat Hindmarch-Watson (Chairperson)
Elizabeth Lane (Treasurer)
Joanne Cram (Secretary, Newsletter)
Morag Cuthbertson (Director)
Nancy Lagana (Director)
Ron Rumak (Director)
Dennis Tupman (Director)
Helene McGall (Director)
Aileen Molloy (Director)

The Council is inviting further nominations to the Board. Please contact Pat Hindmarch-Watson at 228-9589 if you have a concern for the arts in the education system.

UVIC DISTANCE ED-ME 310

Music Education 310: "Learning to Listen to Music-A Multimedia Music Listening and Music Appreciation Course (1.5 Units) will be offered as a distance course in the January to April, 2001 term, by Continuing Studies in Education in cooperation with the Faculty of Education, University of Victoria. For information call: (250) 721-8944; Fax: (250) 721-6603; or E-mail: /wagner@uvcs.uvic.ca

VSB RECOGNITION AWARDS



Last year, the Vancouver School Board presented ten people with the inaugural Recognition Award in honour of their extraordinary commitment to Vancouver schools and students. Award recipients included staff, parents, and community members who have dedicated

themselves to creating innovative programs and finding creative solutions to challenges in their schools. One very deserving honoree is **Mariette Smith**, art teacher at Magee Secondary.

"Art is my life," says Mariette. "It's a way of seeing and being. As an artist you always try to look at

things differently. It makes you more appreciative of the smaller things." Many will already know of Mariette's work at her previous school, General Brock Elementary, where she brought together students, teachers and community members aged 3 to 60 to help paint two large exterior murals. To foster multicultural understanding, she organized the creation of a multicultural quilt and invited community members to sculpt clay self-portraits that were joined together in a project entitled *The Many Faces of Brock*. At Magee she helped students sandblast portraits of themselves on a large glass pane that was inserted in a historic window frame and placed in the newly renovated school.

Nomination forms for this year's awards are online at www.vsb.bc.ca. Deadline is December 31.

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