

**N E W S L E T T E R**

**ARTS IN EDUCATION COUNCIL OF B.C.**

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**SPRING 2003**

THE ARTS IN EDUCATION  
NEWSLETTER

is published quarterly by the  
Western Council of  
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which functions as the  
Arts In Education Council of BC

ISSN 1197-432X

*It's All About  
Joy!*

*"Music brightens up the mind. When you learn  
something new you feel good, and that  
makes you feel good in subjects like math."*

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***"The purpose of  
art is not the  
release of a  
momentary  
ejection of  
adrenaline but  
rather the  
gradual, lifelong  
construction of a  
state of wonder  
and serenity."***

– GLENN GOULD

The arts are a **joyful** experience, the arts **engage** one on many levels, the arts are **transcendent**, often changing the way we view ourselves and the world. As arts educators and advocates, we know that when young children are exposed to the arts in the early grades, their school experience is one of joyful engagement. Our task is always to convince those who would cut funding, and get "back to the basics", that the arts are the "basics". Now we have a significant piece of evidence, a study done in our schools, in our country.

A major Canadian study, a three-year investigation by researchers Dr. Rena Upitis and Dr. Katharine Smithrim of Queen's University, shows the powerful effects of arts on learning. Students in the Royal Conservatory of Music's **Learning Through the Arts (LTTA)** program scored as much as 11 percentile points higher on standardized mathematics tests of computation and estimation than their peers in control schools, after three years of involvement in the LTTA program. Of course, the links between music and maths achievement have been much studied and discussed, but this study actually demonstrates that *all* of the arts have a truly pervasive influence on *all* people and *all* parts of the school experience. For example, the researchers found that teachers, parents and administrators alike see benefits from including the arts in the curriculum. Nearly 90% of all the parents in the study, from all kinds of elementary schools, said that the

*(continued on pages 2 & 3)*

## IT'S ALL ABOUT JOY! *(continued from page 1)*

arts motivate children to learn. Principals of LTTA schools were more likely to personally regard the arts as "very important". Thousands of comments from participating children show that they really enjoyed going to school on days when arts activities were planned. A higher percentage of LTTA teachers believe that the arts are effective in reaching hard-to-educate students, than teachers at other schools.

This study is important for several reasons: it is Canadian, it is large, it is longitudinal, it involves many different types of schools from B.C. to Newfoundland and Labrador, and it includes students from all socioeconomic classes. U.B.C.'s Dr. Rita Irwin, who, with Dr. Kit Grauer assisted with research design, data gathering and results analysis, said that the findings are "especially important because 11% was the case *no matter what* - income, location, teacher qualifications - ... ." Of course, one might say that the study is all about integration, about "using" the arts to enhance accomplishment in other subjects. The researchers acknowledge this concern "that the arts might serve as handmaids to other subjects", but stress that "any justification for the arts should be made in terms of the important and unique

contributions that arise from arts education." The research was designed to ascertain the distinct contributions of the arts to learning, such as "developing the capacity for attention to detail ... as well as the ability to make judgments in the absence of clear rules, and learning about the importance of nuance."

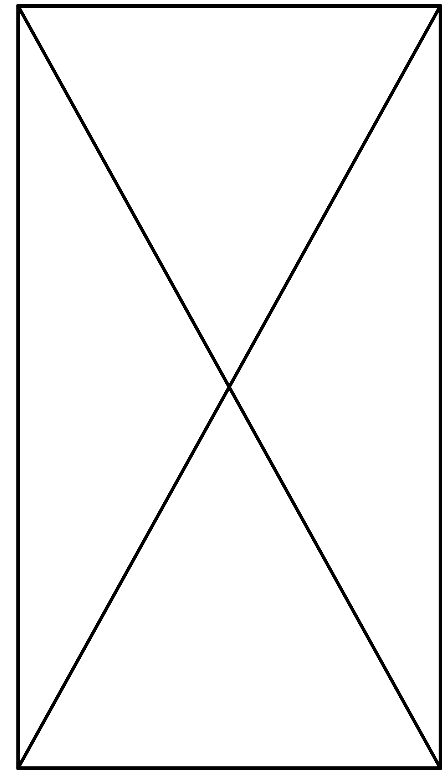
The total sample consisted of 6,675 students from Grades 1 to 6, from LTTA schools and from two types of control schools (some with a technology focus and others with no specific school-wide curriculum focus).

The research objectives were, briefly:

1. To determine if students in LTTA schools benefited from the program, as evidenced by positive changes in attitudes towards the arts and learning, achievement on standardized tests of language and mathematics as compared to control schools, and positive changes in out-of-school activities such as reading for pleasure.
2. To determine if there were changes in teacher practices at LTTA schools as compared to the control schools, as evidenced by self-reported changes in attitudes and practices, and observations made by parents, artists, and administrators.
3. To determine if there were changes in administrative beliefs and practices as evidenced by self-reported changes through surveys and interviews.

The investigators' findings are reported in detail in two sections, Part I, which was released in November, 2002, and Part II, forthcoming in April, 2003. Part I focuses on student achievement and engagement, specifically on

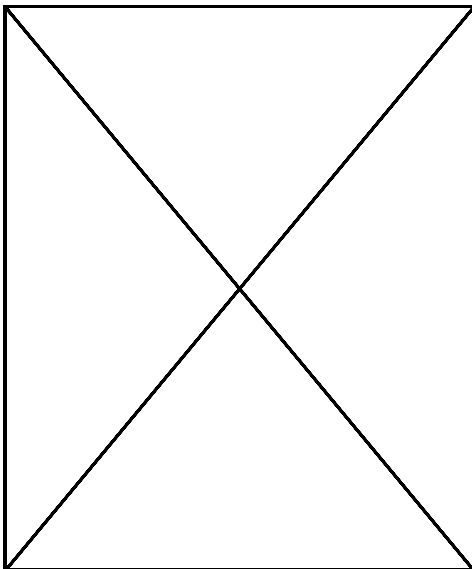
*(continued on page 3)*



### What is "Learning Through the Arts"?

LTTA is an international educational initiative dedicated to changing the way the core curriculum is taught and learned in public schools. LTTA believes in integration of the arts in teaching everything from math to language to science to...almost anything you can imagine. Lesson plans, teacher tips, demonstration videos and inspiring messages from LTTA artists are offered on the web site, [www.ltta.ca](http://www.ltta.ca)

The LTTA program brings actors, musicians, painters and writers into more than 170 schools across Canada. Together with teachers, these artists create lively ways to present curriculum, bringing new vitality to the classroom. "Students learn math, language, history and social studies by making images, creating dances, telling stories and singing songs."



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## IT'S ALL ABOUT JOY!

*(continued from page 2)*

those students who were in Grade 4 when the study began, and in Grade 6 when it finished. In Part II, the experiences of students in other grades will be described. Part II will "also describe changes to teachers', artists', and administrators' beliefs and practices over the three-year period."

Much is made of "engagement". The researchers say, "By engagement, we mean the sense of being wholly involved. This word comes from the French term *engagé*, which, when used to describe a writer or artist, means morally committed. It is this commitment – the physical, emotional, intellectual and social commitment – which emerged again and again in written and oral reports of the LTTA experience by students, teachers, administrators, parents and artists. There were thousands of comments about such things as joy, attentiveness, and motivation. Some examples:

*An administrator told this story about a boy who said "Oh, that was such a great experience, I got to dance in front of everybody! It made me feel like a star!" And the administrator thought, "That's it! I think it makes a lot of students feel like stars."*

*LTTA often involves physical activities which help keep young children motivated and attentive. (teacher)*

*LTTA opens up the door for how you can express yourself, (Grade 6 student)*

*I see the joy in students. I want to see that joy. (teacher)*

The complete Part I of the study is available online through the LTTA website at [www.ltta.ca](http://www.ltta.ca). Look it up, read it, talk about it! We look forward to Part II in April, 2003.

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## Council News

On February 12, the Arts in Education Council of B.C. hosted a small workshop at UBC. Approximately 30 participants were specifically invited, and represented all those who are, or should be, concerned about the present situation of arts in education, and who are interested in talking about real examples of what works, what schools or districts have managed to keep the arts going, and what we can do to stimulate more arts without spending more money or changing curricula. Teachers, parents, administrators, Ministry of Education personnel, arts/ed groups, and advocates such as our Council members were among those invited to consider

two questions:

*Since some quality arts education programs exist in schools, why is this not the case in all or most schools?*

*How can schools be helped to move towards sustained, sequential arts learning rather than maintaining an assumption that a once a year concert and occasional "crafts" represent an arts program?*

As one would expect, focus group discussions were lively and passionate. Many very good ideas emerged. The organizers are preparing a detailed report for all those who attended; this will be shared with Council members in the next issue of this newsletter.

### Music Education Awards

Two well-deserved awards in the music education field have come to our attention.

We are very happy to note that one of our Board Members, **Dennis Tupman**, received the **Honorary Life Award** from the Canadian Music Educators' Association, at the recent annual meeting of the B.C. Music Educators' Association. To those who might not know Dennis (are there any?), he has been involved in music and arts education for more than forty years. He was an Arts Coordinator for the Performing Arts in the Vancouver School Board for 21 years, "retiring" in 1992. Since then he has been very active as a speaker, clinician, adjudicator, writer and teacher, and a tireless advocate for the place of arts in the education system. In the words of Kathy Fester, BCMEA President, "Dennis's music advocacy at all levels of government has helped to protect music programmes in so many ways. Dennis truly is the spiritual leader of music education in this province."

At the same meeting, **Norman Mould**, North Vancouver Handsworth Secondary School parent and President of the

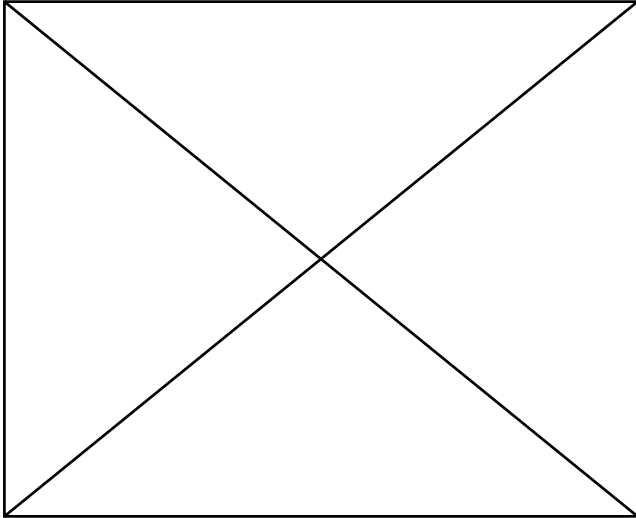
Coalition for Music Education in B.C. received the B.C. Music Educators' Association **2003 Special Distinguished Service Award**.

Norman was described as being a parent first – supporting his children and their school music involvement. His volunteer work with the Coalition was also highlighted. Norman has been a dedicated lobbyist for school music education. He has met with the Ministry of Education, College of Teachers, B.C. Teachers' Federation and other organizations to promote music education from the perspective of a parent and taxpayer. He has also written to all school principals in the province and to school trustees about the importance of school music.

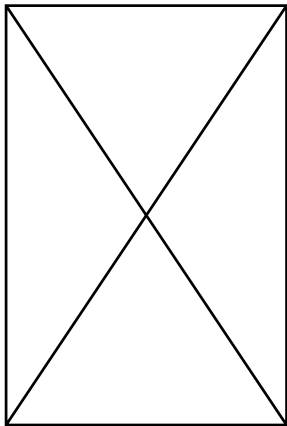
We at the Arts in Education Council of B.C. have benefited from Norman's expertise and enthusiasm as one of the organizers of our recent Workshop on Arts Education, at UBC in February (see *Council News* in this newsletter) and as a focus group facilitator at this event.

Congratulations Dennis and Norman!

# UPCOMING EVENTS



**Welcome Quilt**, a collaboration between Edmonds Community School students and Wendy Lewington-Coultier in 1998.  
*From the ArtStarts website.*



**Lake Trail Murals**, a collaboration between Lake Trail Junior School Grade 9 students and Glen Rabena in 1998.  
*From the ArtStarts website.*

## ARTSCAN 2003

April 9-16, 2003

**Roundhouse Community Centre, Vancouver.**

ArtScan, produced by ArtStarts in Schools, is a 3-day performing and visual arts showcase and conference for B.C. school and school district arts programmers interested in performers and artists who work with young audiences. Info at [www.artstarts.ca](http://www.artstarts.ca)

## B.C. ARTS & CULTURE WEEK

April 27-May 3, 2003

**“Shaping today. Inspiring Tomorrow.”**

Coordinated by the Assembly of B.C. Arts Councils and ArtStarts in Schools, the week is financially supported by the B.C. Arts Council. The goals of Arts & Culture Week are to encourage participation in cultural activities and events, and raise awareness about the contribution of arts and culture to all aspects of our lives in B.C. In schools, ArtsWeek is becoming a province-wide focus for celebrating student achievements in the arts, connecting with community arts groups, learning about careers in the arts, lobbying for arts in education, and much more. Check it out at [www.bcartsweek.ca](http://www.bcartsweek.ca)

## ASSEMBLY OF B.C. ARTS COUNCILS AGM and CONFERENCE

September 19-21, 2003

Hosted by the North Van Arts Council. Details available soon at [www.assemblybcartscouncils.ca](http://www.assemblybcartscouncils.ca)

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Corporate and Individual Donations are Welcome. Please enclose fee with application. Make cheque payable to the Arts in Education Council (a registered non-profit society). Mail to Arts in Education Council, PO Box 62023, Arbutus RPO, #143 - 4255 Arbutus Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1Z1. Tax receipts will be issued. Your donation is very much appreciated.



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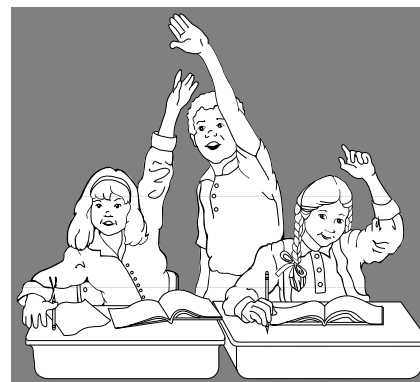
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***“Education should promote a ‘love affair’ between the student and the imagination-perception-representation cycle. The arts naturally do this.”***

– DR. RITA IRWIN  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UBC

## How Can We Help Elementary Arts Education?

*(Report prepared by  
Gary Rupert, John White,  
Norman Mould & Joanne Cram)*



On February 13, the Arts in Education Council of B.C. sponsored a **Forum on Elementary Arts Education**, at the University of British Columbia. Participants were invited from every area of arts education: the various PSAs from dance, drama, visual arts and music, school trustees, parents, advocacy groups, school administrators, arts councils, and faculties of education (SFU, UBC and UVic). A keynote address by Dr. Rita Irwin, a member of the recent Learning Through the Arts National Assessment Program research team, opened the meeting.

The large group was then divided into smaller discussion groups who brainstormed. The recommendations you will read below represent the ideas and opinions of several lively dialogues.

This is a first step. The Council intends to follow up with some meetings with individual decision-makers, and to gather a body of “best-case” programs, where quality, sequential, long-term arts education is already in progress. This information can then be shared. We sincerely welcome input from readers, especially those in schools outside the Lower Mainland. If your elementary school is maintaining good fine arts education programming despite the challenges of diminishing funding and changes to staff, curriculum and space, we would like to hear from you. We’d also like to hear from students, who were not included in the first discussion round.

### Background

In the fall of 2002, the Arts in Education Council of B.C. wondered how schools might address some of the weaknesses in elementary arts education, and take instruction from some of the strengths. We perceived that it might be a good idea to bring together all the players, so to speak, in one room. We hoped to create a dialogue among partner organizations that would lead to proactive strategies for improving and expanding fine arts education in elementary schools.

*(continued on page 2)*

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## HOW CAN WE HELP ELEMENTARY ARTS EDUCATION? *(continued from page 1)*

The first step was to form a small planning committee of representatives from various concerned groups, from advocacy bodies such as the Coalition for Music Education, to education faculty members, to teachers and so on. These discussions resulted in a common concern about the state of arts education in the context of rapid changes in education resulting from funding problems, rapid introduction of new curricula and the pressure arising from various assessment reports made public in the media. Our meetings also discussed the contradiction of the generally positive acceptance of the arts at the professional and community levels versus a perceived tolerance for insubstantial arts programs in many B.C. schools. As we all know, the fine arts are now firmly in the curriculum. We all asked, "Why are they not being well taught in many schools?" This seemed to be a simple, yet provocative question to ask a comprehensive group of educators, administrators, advocates, and parents. A decision was made to hold a forum in February, 2003, to focus on elementary education and to concentrate on the development of strategies that would be achievable today, with today's funding and today's curricula.

### Context

There are two aspects to the context within which this Forum was initiated. First, it was acknowledged that education is in flux as a result of proportionately reduced resources for schools. Secondly, the Council has observed a high degree of unevenness in arts education levels among the schools in the Province. With this context in mind, forum participants were asked to examine two fundamental questions:

1. Since some quality arts education programs exist in

elementary schools, why is this not the case in all or most of our schools?

2. How can elementary schools be helped to move towards sustained, sequential arts learning rather than maintaining an assumption that a once-a-year concert and occasional "crafts" represent an arts program?

### Recommendations

The recommendations arising from the 2003 Elementary Arts Education Forum fall into three main areas of possible future strategies:

#### 1. Social forces

- (a) Educators should be proactive in helping parents understand the value of arts education for children, in terms of the development of critical and divergent thinking, of the development of multiple skills and abilities and self-concept.
- (b) Parents and the community should also be informed with respect to the essential role arts education can play in giving students a voice in the community and providing a vehicle for cross-cultural understanding.
- (c) Parents and the community should be helped to understand the economic and social impact of the arts, and the importance of the arts in maintaining a voice for Canadian culture in the face of U.S. cultural domination.

#### 2. Professional Development

- (a) Teacher education programs should be encouraged to provide a better understanding of the role arts learning plays in developing thinking; in engaging learners; and in developing methodology for sequential, sustained, quality arts learning throughout the early years of schooling.
- (b) Education partners should seek

opportunities to provide inservice education for all teachers to address the deficiencies in arts education methodology among the current teaching force with a view to improving the delivery of this sequential, quality learning.

- (c) Increased attention should be directed to instructional strategies that emphasize the development of cognitive, social and personal competencies and the power of arts learning to stimulate and enhance these competencies.

#### 3. Administrative Support and Leadership

- (a) School and district administrators should be encouraged to work with those responsible for the design of teacher education programs to modify existing program criteria to reflect the overwhelming evidence from arts education research. We need to ensure that new teachers have the understanding and methodology needed to offer quality arts learning.
- (b) Education leaders are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues who have developed successful arts programs; there are good existing models which may be adopted by other schools.
- (c) School districts and school leaders should implement program assessment activities designed to ensure that all children receive access to regular, quality arts learning as described in current Ministry of Education outcomes for the arts.
- (d) Principals should implement, over time, a policy of proactive staffing and school organization strategies to ensure that arts teaching expertise in all arts disciplines is available and that both the allocation of resources and the organization of instructional time provide for sequential, sustained, quality arts learning for all children.

## IN THE NEWS



**Congratulations... to the** Clearwater Elementary School Band, **and to its director, teacher Bruce Whitelaw**, who played all the way to a **Gold** in their category at a recent national school band competition in Toronto (May 24, 2003). The story here is that this ongoing band program really started from zero – Bruce Whitelaw learning, from scratch, to manage and conduct along with the kids who were learning how to play. That's dedication!

*(Item on CBC 1, 25 May, 2003)*

### **Interactive Theatre Battles School Bullying**

Vancouver's **Headlines Theatre** debuted a new play this spring, called *Don't Say a Word*, featuring students staging a story that sets up several examples of bullying (taken from their own experiences) and then asks the audience members to "intervene". In Headlines "forum theatre", volunteer viewers step onto the makeshift "stage", take over a role, and attempt to solve a seemingly hopeless situation.

The project started in November and December, 2002, when 40 students joined Headlines Theatre to create six forum plays during intensive workshops at Tupper and Gladstone Secondary Schools. They then took those pieces before hundreds of their classmates. Later, six students chosen from the original group drew from the original plays to create a single, new work.

*"Anti-bullying initiatives have been tried before, but with theatre it's very, very powerful,"* said Tupper drama teacher Tim McGeer. *"It's a great way to get their (students') energy out, and they can take part not just as actors but as audience members. ... I've done a lot of different theatrical projects, but I was particularly impressed with this one in the changes in the students who took part in these workshops. For a lot it was a sort of life-changing process."*

*(The Georgia Straight, February 6, 2003)*

### **Nootka Elementary Starts Fine Arts Immersion Program:**

Dance, drama, music and visual arts make up 30% of the students' time in this school's new stream, a first in the Vancouver School District. In a difficult, deficit-ridden education climate, Nootka's accomplishment is a minor miracle accomplished with an enormous amount of effort and dedication. Briefly, a group of committed parents saw an opportunity when Nootka School was slated for expansion. With the extra space, there was an opportunity to create something new, a long hoped-for fine arts immersion program. The group figured the project could be accomplished with no additional funding save the cost of teachers' salaries and the School Board went for the idea. "Everything else would be addressed via donations, parents' fundraisers, and sheer will."

Nootka's program is unique in that it is in a "dual-stream" school, which also includes a non-immersion stream. Said one parent: "We need to share resources, share excitement, so that it benefits the whole school population, not just the fine-arts program." The fine-arts stream will grow by one grade each year, up to and including Grade 7. The program was open to students from all over the district, but those already attending Nootka had first crack.

Staffing was critical. To support the inclusive spirit of a dual-stream school, principal Derek Passaglia had to find teachers "who had solid credentials as general educators and with specific qualifications to teach the arts." "These teachers needed to have a passion," said Passaglia, "They needed to be exceptional teachers and exceptional artists in their own right. That's a tall order."

The Nootka experience may be instructive to other groups and individuals wishing to get more arts in their school, whether as whole programs or merely individual courses of instruction. It is a synergistic meld of work, passion and opportunity. An extremely focused and dedicated **parent group** seized the **opportunity** (extra classrooms), obtained **School Board** support, and worked closely with the **school and community**.

A **highly committed principal** hired **eminently qualified arts teachers**. And perhaps as important as everything else, all involved have the **passion and enthusiasm** to make it work. Chronic lack of money seems to be a minor concern and waiting lists are growing. Principal Passaglia knows they have a success: "I can see it's working by the manner in which the children interact with their teachers; it's nothing short of loving. I know it's working through discussions I have with parents, both formally in my office and in the hallways. I know it's working by the joy and happiness I see in the faces of the kids."

*(From an article by Gail Johnson, in The Georgia Straight, February 6, 2003.)*

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## TEACHER INSTITUTE: “Drawing the World”

From **July 6 to 11**, the **Vancouver Art Gallery’s Teacher Institute** brings together internationally renowned scholars, educators and curators to share their extensive knowledge and experience of art, culture and teaching. Focusing on the *Drawing the World* summer exhibition, the Institute will explore how meaning is created and mediated through drawing. Participants will visit the exhibitions daily and work directly from the drawings.

The Teacher Institute is part of the VAG’s “teaching the teachers” strategy, bringing art into classrooms and into the lives of our children. The VAG respects the significant role played by teachers in shaping young people’s understanding of visual images and their ability to succeed in an increasingly visual world.

Credit and non-credit options are available. To register, phone or email Chris Elliott, (604)822-8553, [chris.elliott@ubc.ca](mailto:chris.elliott@ubc.ca)

**Lectures and Panel Discussions:** The Teacher Institute evening events are open to the general public. Admission: \$12 per event; \$7 seniors, students and VAG members. Phone (604)662-4717. All lectures at 7 pm., UBC Robson Square facility.

***Drawing on Life.*** Artists’ panel with Natasha McHardy and Luanne Martineau, moderated by Elizabeth MacKenzie. July 7.

***Culture, Representation and Teaching.*** Panel with curator Sue Rowley, anthropologist Andrea Walsh and educator Michael Marker, moderated by Dr. Graeme Chalmers. July 8.

***Drawing from the Renaissance to the Baroque.*** Dr. Rose Marie San Juan. July 9.

***Thinking/Drawing.*** Dr. Elliot Eisner, Professor of Education and Art, and Chair, Curriculum Studies and Teacher Education, Stanford University. July 11.

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**PLEASE NOTE OUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS ABOVE**

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***“Arts education is essential to discernment and judgment and in the broadest sense, arts advocacy is the fight for the return of the life of the spirit to the centre of our existence... people forget that art and artists render life bearable.”***

– SHIRLEY THOMPSON  
FORMER EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR OF THE CANADA  
COUNCIL, 1999

## NOTICE OF

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2003 Annual General Meeting  
of the

Arts in Education Council of B.C.

will take place

from 4:30 to 6:00 pm

on Thursday, October 30, 2003

in the Boardroom of

The B.C. School Trustees' Association Office

1580 West Broadway, Vancouver

### Agenda

4:30 pm Refreshments

4:45 pm Informal Discussion:

“Forum Follow-up” :

“What did we learn from our  
February forum on elementary  
arts education?”

5:45 pm **Annual General Meeting**

*Everyone Welcome!*

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## TEACHER TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE ARTS

By now, we are all well acquainted with research on the transformative quality of the arts in the elementary school curriculum – on students' academic prowess, enjoyment of learning, social skills, teamwork, problem solving and so on. The recent, landmark Canadian study undertaken by the Royal Conservatory of Music's Learning Through the Arts (LTTA) Program (see our Spring 2003 newsletter), demonstrated the powerful effect of the arts not only in themselves, but in all parts of the school experience. Queen's University Researchers Dr. Rena Upitis and Dr. Katherine Smithrim showed that participating schools not only posted higher maths scores, but that subjective qualities such as joy, attentiveness and motivation were markedly increased.

But what about the teachers? In a related project entitled *Teacher Transformation Through the Arts*, Upitis and Smithrim have undertaken a four-year research project in partnership with St. Patrick Elementary School in Kingston, Ontario. Elementary teachers work directly with artists to become beginning artists and musicians.

As artists and educators, Upitis and Smithrim know that the arts enhance learning. They are aware that both the elimination of the role of arts "specialists" in our schools and the implementation of new curricula place the onus on all teachers to provide instruction in

the arts. However, instead of teaching educators how to teach art, Upitis and Smithrim argue that turning educators into artists will have far more lasting effects on their desire and confidence to incorporate the arts into their teaching.

The research being conducted at St. Patrick School promotes close links between the teachers, the research team and the Kingston artists who lead the art workshops. Together they have explored watercolour and acrylic painting, batik, singing, creative writing, guitar and keyboard playing, pinhole camera photography, woodworking and more. Teachers have also been encouraged to take on personal learning projects. In addition, each year, a graduate student or a local artist acts as an artist-in-residence at the school, offering opportunities for students and teachers alike to participate in art activities.

Researchers use a variety of means to assess the changes that are taking place at St. Patrick School. Teachers are interviewed individually and in groups. They are asked to submit written evaluations and to fill out questionnaires, and they have been encouraged to keep portfolios of their artwork and reflections. Now, in the third year of the project, their researchers are observing classes in order to determine how participation in the workshops has affected teaching practices.

The teachers report that they have experienced both personal and professional benefits from the project. Some say that they emerge from the workshops relaxed and confident to try new things. Many speak of a new appreciation of the planning and hard work that go into art-making and a realization that each one of us is capable of creating art.

Some have commented that doing their own art has revitalized their teaching of other subjects and reminded them of "where the students are coming from". Some teachers proudly display their works of art and provide the time,

instruction and support to enable students to undertake similar projects.

Teachers at St. Patrick School were at first very skeptical when they were asked to devote professional development time and even some weekend hours to participation in art workshops:

*"I have too many other, more important things to do."*

*"I'm not an artist. I won't be good at this."*

*"This won't help me with my teaching."*

Now, almost three years later, these teachers have been "transformed". As the workshops continue, the responses are quite different:

*"Now, when I hear of a workshop, I can't wait!"*

*"I'm amazed by what I created."*

*"I'm happier, and teachers have to be happy to teach."*

Perhaps Smithrim and Upitis were alerted to the transformative power of actually participating in the art by a teacher they interviewed some years ago, likely before the current research projects. In an article in the Spring 2003 issue of the *Canadian Music Educator*, they state:

*"In Ontario, much of the music is now taught by generalist classroom teachers, many of whom have little school-related experience in music, and little out-of-school music-making experience for that matter. One of the generalist class room teachers we interviewed five years ago had this to say about the way she taught music when she felt compelled to 'follow the curriculum':*

*'I was the worst recorder teacher in the world. I remember one Grade 6 class; I was just like Hitler. They did learn to play, but it was painful, not joyful. I was so mean to them when they held the recorder the wrong way. Or*

*(continued on page 3)*



## TEACHER TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE ARTS (continued from page 2)

*played the wrong notes.'*

Later in the article, the authors return to this teacher who apparently had always wanted to play the guitar:

"We encouraged her, and provided some workshops and resources. Over a period of several years...she became a competent guitarist. Early on in the process, she summoned up the courage to take her guitar into the classroom. Her students watched her struggle. They encouraged her. She showed them that making mistakes was part of the learning process. And over time, her teaching of music changed dramatically:

*'It's so different now. I still teach recorder (when we're not playing guitar!), but I've found a play-along CD - a jazzy thing - that we use to accompany easy B-A-G tunes. Last week, a group of students started dancing spontaneously to the*

*music. It was wonderful! And it was something I never would have allowed before. And now I have eight kids taking lessons from my guitar teacher. You should see the change in these kids. It's changed their lives; I guess that's why I'm so jubilant about it.'*

The Arts in Education Council has long maintained that the elementary school teacher is central to solving the problem of dwindling arts content right from K through to 12. Reach children when they are young, with high quality arts instruction and these same children will ask for the arts as part of their education through high school and into post-secondary institutions. Inspired and enthusiastic teachers who have real arts experiences will impart this excitement to their young students. Education faculties take note - this might be one way to get more fine arts into the generalist program. Now, if we could just get the parents experiencing art.... !



Doing is believing. We look forward to the final report on this interesting research project.

Information for the above was taken from the Queen's University website at [educ.queensu.ca](http://educ.queensu.ca). Learning Through the Arts is accessible at [www.ltta.ca](http://www.ltta.ca).

## IN THE NEWS

### LURING NEW AUDIENCES

Lower the price and they will come. We hear that music and theatre audiences, especially for the classics, and particularly, youthful audiences, are dwindling. Britain's Royal National Theatre seems to have found a way to ensure sell-out houses, night after night. The Theatre's director, Nicholas Hytner, rocked the London theatre world this summer when he reduced ticket prices for two-thirds of the seats in the complex's flagship Olivier Theatre to a flat £10 (about \$25C). The aim is fundamental - to attract new playgoers and to make it possible for existing National faithfuls to attend more often. Hytner says he has a sense of "public mission" and believes that it is a fundamental responsibility of a state-subsidized theatre to bring as many people into the tent as possible. Noted now at National performances are "teenagers with dynamic haircuts and torn jeans mingling with other audience members." (To bring perspective to the story, £10 is about the price of a first-run movie ticket in London.) Apparently thirty-three percent of the people who came to see a recent production of *Henry V* had never been in the theatre before. Now that's audience building! (*The Vancouver Sun*, September 29, 2003)

### MAX WYMAN ON ARTS EDUCATION

Well-known Canadian arts critic, writer, dance historian, lecturer, Max Wyman, is working on a series of articles, a "manifesto" of sorts proclaiming his belief that "culture, like health and education, is not only an unassailable human right but essential to the social and ethical well-being of society - and should be fostered and funded accordingly." Douglas and McIntyre will bring out this book-length "argument for the arts" next spring. Meanwhile, Max gave us a sample this summer in a piece for the *Vancouver Sun*. In it, he comes out very strongly for arts in the education system.

He feels that in a world that has become both "dangerous" (environmental degradation, human rights abuses, global health threats...) and "thrilling" (advances in scientific research such as robotics, stem cells, communications technologies), cultural engagement is essential in helping us make moral and ethical choices and "find solutions to problems we don't even know exist yet." He says:

*"...it is imperative that a diverse and imaginative cultural expression, one that asserts the primacy of the human and the*

*humane in the face of the dehumanizing forces of the modern world, is fostered as a fundamental component of the dreams and ideals of the society in which we live.*

*"We see society's growing appetite for that creative connection at the box office, in the galleries and in the bookstores, in on-line programs in creative writing. But the first point of integration has to be the school, where the record is one of shameful short-sightedness and blatant neglect.*

*"It's not a matter of turning out artists, though that can certainly be a spinoff. It's not a matter of turning out potential members of the future arts audience, though that's also a possible result. It's to do with developing the person.*

*"Most of Canada's provinces have made fine-sounding statements of principle about the importance of arts education. Few have translated that fine language into practical application within the curriculum. Generation after generation, we have deliberately, unforgivably dismissed the rich promise that arts education offers our young." (Vancouver Sun, July 26, 2003)*

# **NEW!**

## **SCHOOLS IN COMMUNITY GRANT**

ArtStarts in Schools reports that “students can now experience the magic of live performance in a community venue thanks to a unique two-year pilot program. The Schools in Community grant will fund school-based organizations to present performances in community venues. The matching grant is available to schools, school districts, and school-based parent groups, and covers such expenses as artists’ fees, venue rental, and transportation to and from the venue.

Allowing youth to experience performance in traditional spaces – whether its theatre, dance, music or and number of innovative disciplines – is the grant’s main objective.

Funded through Canadian Heritage’s Arts Presentation Canada program, it also aims to increase programming diversity. Disciplines such as dance, classical music and First Nations performances can really shine in such venues as a theatre or longhouse. As well, the grant aims to foster partnerships and collaboration between educational presenters, local parent groups, and their local, community venues. Ultimately, the program hopes to build committed, arts audiences for the future.

For more information, visit [www.artstarts.ca](http://www.artstarts.ca). The first application deadline is November 7, with further deadlines later in the year.

**PLEASE LEND YOUR SUPPORT TO ARTS IN EDUCATION**

### **MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

#### **ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP (\$50)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Association or Organization Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person, Name, Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No.      Fax No.      e-mail

#### **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP (\$15)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No.      (work)      (home)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fax No.      e-mail

Corporate and Individual Donations are Welcome. Please enclose fee with application. Make cheque payable to the Arts in Education Council (a registered non-profit society). Mail to Arts in Education Council, PO Box 62023, Arbutus RPO, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1Z1. Tax receipts will be issued. Your donation is very much appreciated.



# ARTS IN EDUCATION

N E W S L E T T E R

## ARTS IN EDUCATION COUNCIL OF B.C.

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***"A teacher friend tells her students that a story or a poem needs to have "moment", making the reader pause and reflect on the world. An arts education is all about developing the capacity for "moment" – a seismic jolt that shakes up our consciousness, our old encrusted ways of seeing and doing things."***

– RAMON CORTINES  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

## CRITICAL FACTORS IN GAINING THE "ARTS ADVANTAGE": THE U.S. EXPERIENCE

Following the Arts in Education Council's February Forum at UBC, one strong recommendation was that the Council assemble a roster of B.C. elementary schools which maintain a vibrant arts presence characterized by sustainable, high quality arts programming unaffected by budget cuts and curriculum and staff changes. We have in mind that these experiences might provide useful information for all schools wishing to strengthen their arts component.

In the U.S., just such a selection was made on a national basis, with school districts. In 1999, the Arts Education Partnership, an American coalition of arts, education, business, philanthropic and government organizations that promotes the essential role of the arts in education, published a report titled *"Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons From School Districts That Value Arts Education"*. While many of the experiences and recommendations would happen only in our dreams here in Canada, the section outlining *"Critical Success Factors for Achieving District-Wide Arts Education"* is full of good sense.

The entire 93-page report can be read on-line at [www.aep-arts.org](http://www.aep-arts.org), but while the district profiles are specifically American, the summary of *"Critical Success Factors"* is excellent advice anywhere. Here are some of the highlights, taken in part from the summary:

### THE COMMUNITY

"In districts with strong arts education, the community – broadly defined as parents and families, artists, arts organizations, businesses, local civic and cultural leaders and institutions – is actively engaged in the arts politics and instructional programs of the district.

"Administrators in these districts support an array of interactions including active parent and community involvement in school arts programs, interdisciplinary teams involving arts specialists in the development of curricula, involvement in community arts events, artist residencies and student exhibitions and performances for community audiences.

### THE SCHOOL BOARD

"School districts with strong arts education programs generally have boards of education that provide a supportive policy framework and environment for the arts.

These boards' members "support plans to strengthen arts education, then apportion resources in accordance with plans, adopt written

*("Critical Factors" continued on page 2)*

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## **CRITICAL FACTORS...** *(continued from page 1)*

policies that value the arts as equal to other subjects, treat arts education equally with other subject areas when budget cuts are required, consider the artistic qualities of buildings and the needs of arts education programs during facility renovation and development.”

### **THE SUPERINTENDENT**

“Superintendents who regularly articulate a vision for arts education are critically important to its successful implementation and stability.

These superintendents “regularly articulate in writing, memos and speeches the importance of the arts in achieving the goals of the district, appoint highly effective district arts coordinators, and encourage education staff to collaborate among disciplines to ensure district-wide initiatives apply to and include the arts.”

### **CONTINUITY**

“There is enough continuity in the school and community leadership to implement comprehensive arts education.

“Stability in formal leadership positions is important in pursuing a set of educational goals, while strong community traditions that embrace the arts are important factors in shaping a consensus supporting arts education.

### **THE DISTRICT ARTS COORDINATOR**

“District arts coordinators facilitate program implementation throughout a school system and maintain an environment of support for arts education.

In the U.S. study, “school board members and superintendents repeatedly affirmed the essential role of the district arts coordinator in sustaining strong arts programs and in keeping ‘the arts’ part of a district’s definition of education.

### **A CADRE OF PRINCIPALS**

“School principals who collectively support the policy of arts education for all students often are instrumental in the policy’s successful district-wide implementation.

“Principals create the expectations and climate in the school building, and their support for arts education is essential. Many principals spoke of early learning or involvement in the arts or of professional development



opportunities that helped them to decide to support arts in their schools. Others were convinced by the effectiveness of arts education in addressing specific issues.

### **THE TEACHER AS ARTIST**

“Effective teachers of the arts are allowed to – indeed are encouraged to – continue to learn and grow in mastery of their art form as well as in their teaching competence.

“The presence of arts specialists in a district’s schools proved time and again to make the difference between successful comprehensive, sequential arts education and those programs in development. Administrators... pointed out that

the best teachers stay actively involved in their art form through exhibitions and performances in district and community venues.

### **AN ELEMENTARY FOUNDATION**

“Strong arts programs in the elementary school years are the foundation for strong system-wide programs.

“Elementary programs establish a foundation in the arts for all students, not just for those in specialized programs or those who choose an arts course in high school. Moreover, in some art forms such as instrumental music, a long period of time is needed for students to achieve even a basic level of proficiency. If such instruction is not begun in elementary grades, a district will not have quality programs at the secondary level.

### **PARENT/PUBLIC RELATIONS**

“School leaders in districts with strong, system-wide arts education seize opportunities to make their programs known throughout the community in order to secure support and funding for them.

A variety of techniques are employed to engage the total school community in arts activities that create a climate of support for arts education. “Exhibition spaces and performance venues in the schools are made available to students, faculty and community artists. Free tickets are provided to students, staff and faculty for attendance at community arts events. Principals told researchers that parents who never come to school for parent-teacher conferences will come to see their child perform, creating opportunities for building relationships important to the school and district.”

*(continued on page 3)*

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## CRITICAL FACTORS...

(continued from page 2)

### PLANNING

"School leaders in this study advise the adoption of a comprehensive vision and plan for arts education but recommend its incremental implementation.

"Researchers were repeatedly told that it was important to combine a compelling vision of the importance of arts education with a thoughtful implementation plan that showed how resources would be apportioned over time to reach all schools and students. Districts have developed a number of strategies for allocating new resources, many of them based on stimulating a "bottom up" request for arts education funding from school sites.

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

School districts that succeed in advancing arts education promote reflective practices at all levels of the schools to improve quality. While researchers found few districts using student assessments in the arts as part of a formal accountability system, the strongest districts actively encourage the use of arts assessment techniques for improving student, teacher, and administrative performance.



The report lists other "critical factors", but the ones that we have noted are most applicable to the Canadian experience. Districts which were exemplary in their arts component were ones encompassing most of these critical factors. And, the desired "arts advantage" happens most often when there is consensus among formal and informal leadership at all levels: consensus on the importance of arts education, and consensus on how best to implement and sustain arts programming within a school district.

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## ARTISTS FOR KIDS TRUST: A Unique Program



Readers in the Lower Mainland will be familiar with the Artists for Kids Trust, and Gallery on the North Shore. Indeed, we've reported on it in past Newsletters. Nevertheless, a little thumbnail portrait of this worthy institution is in order, especially since our lead article says much about cooperation and consensus among students, teachers and the wider community. The Artists for Kids Trust is a brilliant example of this kind of teamwork. The following information is gleaned from the Opus Visual Arts Newsletter archive.

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**Artists for Kids** was conceived in the late 80's when budgetary constraints forced the North Vancouver School Board to downsize. Programs were cut and as is unfortunately often the case, the arts were among the first to go. Undaunted, a committed group of art teachers, led by **Bill MacDonald**, set about to seek external funding sources in order to continue to provide art enrichment through extra-curricular activities.

Using a loan from the North Vancouver School District, Bill purchased an original work of art from each of three well-known B.C. artists: Gordon Smith, Bill Reid, and Jack Shadbolt. They, in turn, agreed to donate a limited edition set of high quality prints, drawn from these images, to Artists for Kids, who would market them and use the generated income to finance after-school art workshops.

The program has never stopped growing, and has received enthusiastic support from an impressive cross-section of contemporary Canadian artists. There are now over forty prints for sale in their gallery

([www.artists4kids.com](http://www.artists4kids.com)), including work by Governor General's Award winners:

Gathie Falk, Betty Goodwin, Takao Tanabe and Irene Whittome. The list of artist/collaborators also includes Kenojuak Ashevak, Anne Meredith Barry, Robert Bateman, Doug Biden, David Blackwood, Marcus Bowcott, Wayne Eastcott, Joe Fafard, Rodney Graham, Ted Harrison, George Littlechild, Roz Marshall, Guido Molinari, Tiki Mulvihille, Toni Onley, Jane Ash Poitras, Charles van Sandwyk, Gu Xiong, Xhwalactun, and of course the original three. Many artists have shared not only their work, but their time, participating actively in after-school and weekend workshops, summer camps, and Artists for Kids sponsored conferences.

So far, five thousand kids have "been touched by art", and Bill Macdonald speculates that the public school programs Artists for Kids run are unique in North America, not only because of the way they are funded, but also because they involve artists and teachers working together as a team.

## COUNCIL NEWS

At the October 30, 2003 Annual General Meeting of the Arts in Education Council of B.C., the following members were re-elected:

### Board of Directors

Ron Rumak

Morag Cuthbertson

Betsy Lane

Joanne Cram

Pat Hindmarch-Watson

Nancy Lagana

### Corresponding Directors

Aileen Molloy

Dennis Tupman

Helene McGall

Helen Daniels

We are eager to expand the Board of Directors, and welcome all those committed to arts in education. We meet in Vancouver for an hour or two every couple of months. As with most small non-profit organizations today, there is no shortage of bright ideas, only of willing volunteers to implement them!

## IN THE NEWS:

# *New Arts Foundation*



The Artists for Kids Gallery at the Leo Marshall Centre in North Vancouver was recently the very appropriate setting for the launch of the **Gordon and Marion Smith Foundation for Young Artists**. The goals of the Foundation are to support and develop in young people an understanding of the value and contribution that art can bring to everyday life. The Smiths hope that other artists and arts advocates will join them in the establishment of this Foundation.

*(From The North Shore News, November 16, 2003)*

PLEASE LEND YOUR SUPPORT TO ARTS IN EDUCATION

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Postal Code

Contact Person, Name, Position

Phone No. Fax No. e-mail

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP (\$15)

Name

Address

Postal Code

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Fax No. e-mail

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