

February, 2009

Volume 8, Issue 6

Notable & Upcoming

March 3, 2009

Premier's Teaching
Excellence Awards-
Celebration of
Learning Luncheon

March 2-8, 2009

Education Week

March 3-9, 2009

International Adult
Learner's Week

March 13, 2009

Schools close for
spring vacation

March 16-20, 2009

Spring vacation

March 23, 2009

Schools reopen after
spring vacation

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Write Me a Story: the Lieutenant Governor's Literacy Program



Photo above: The Honourable Steven L. Point taking questions from students at Crystalview Elementary

Anyone who enjoys writing and story-telling is invited to submit a story to the Lieutenant Governor of B.C.'s *Write Me a Story* literacy program! Each story will be read by His Honour and every participant will receive a letter of acknowledgement.

The Crystalview Elementary School from the Sooke School District in Victoria, is one of the 1,800 participants in the program. On January 16, the school had the opportunity to meet and listen to the Lieutenant Governor and other officials. At the assembly the school also received a book "I Am Raven" by David Bouchard and Andy Ever, from the Honourable Steven L. Point.

His Honour also visited Mrs. Debbie McLaren's grade 2-3 class, who were the first to submit their stories. The class received their stories back, each personally signed by their special guest, along

with a Government House pencil. Some of the students also shared their stories with their visitors.

"The Lt. Gov.'s visit provided our staff and students with a wonderful opportunity to learn about the role of the Lt. Gov., why Canada is part of the Commonwealth...Our students were also given the opportunity to learn about the Coast Salish peoples whose traditional lands we all live on," said Bonnie Stacy, Principal of Crystalview Elementary.

For more information and to access an entry form, visit the Government House website at:

www.ltgov.bc.ca/events/media-releases/literacy_program.htm.



Canadian school portal for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games

[/EDU](http://www.vancouver2010.com/en/culture-and-education/education/-/33970/1qaa2ey/index.html) is the Canadian school portal for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The website features five main themes: sport, culture, sustainability, the Olympic Movement and the Paralympic Movement, plus the overarching theme of global citizenship.

For more information on /EDU, go to www.vancouver2010.com/en/culture-and-education/education/-/33970/1qaa2ey/index.html.

Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History

Do you know a great history or social studies teacher who has made a tremendous contribution in the classroom?

Canada's National History Society is inviting nominations from educators, students and parents to the 14th Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. Elementary, middle and senior teachers are also encouraged to submit their unique teaching approaches for a chance to win.

Six recipients will receive a \$2,500 reward, a medal, a trip for two to attend the Awards festivities and official ceremony with Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada. Their schools will also receive a reward as well. Submission deadline is April 30, 2009.

For more information including nomination rules please visit www.historysociety.ca/gga.asp?subsection=rul. Nomination forms are available at: www.historysociety.ca/gga.asp?subsection=nom.

Curious about the 2008 recipients? Visit <http://www.historysociety.ca/gga.asp?subsection=pro> for details.



Back row (left to right): Governor General's Awards 2008 recipients Anne Tenning, Bev Milobarden Ouden, Joe Stafford, and Mike Ward. Front row (left to right): Governor General's Awards recipient Nancy Hamer Strahl, History Society Board Chair J. Douglas Barrington, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, History Society President and CEO Deborah Morrison, Governor General's Awards recipient Jean-Pierre Frigon.

Promoting Innovation in Classrooms



Photo above: (left to right) Cole Northey, alexis Dutnall, Caleb Axelrod and Charlotte Kidd with their "Instant Challenge" freestanding tower.

Innovation is a popular topic today and is defined by many educators as a "creative idea put to productive and profitable use."

Why is Innovation important to our education system? Sir Ken Robinson, who recently spoke at the B.C. Superintendent's Conference, probably put it best: "Our educational system needs to start treating creativity as being just as important as literacy."

Numerous studies have shown that the 'ideal time' for planting the seeds of innovation are grades four to seven, a peak time to spark children's curiosity and creativity. There is no time like the present to bring innovation into the classroom!

What can our education leaders do to promote innovation? Teachers and administrators might consider advocating for after school programs that help develop these strategic creativity skills.

Destination ImagiNation is a province-wide program designed to develop students' innovaton skills, such as creativity, teamwork and communication in a fun, competitive and cost effective environment. The program divides participants into teams of two to seven members to build their skills and share their talents during a scheduled challenge. This program could help "start the wheels in motion," and provide a strong foundation for future developments. Fees for participation vary.

For more information contact Faith Garriock at 604-925-0622 (bcdi@shaw.ca).

Grow Tomatoes from Mars: Tomatosphere Program



Photo above: Theresa Rondeau Vuk (right), Program Manager, Closed Environment Systems Laboratory, University of Guelph with Dr. Robert Thirsk (left), Canadian Space Agency astronaut

Want to find out what it's like to grow tomatoes from special seeds under conditions that are out of this world?

The Tomatosphere Project Team is inviting schools across Canada to take part in *Tomatosphere*, a curriculum-based program for Grades 3-10 students. The program combines the subjects of science, nutrition, space and environmental studies with a hands-on fermentation experiment.

Participating classes will receive two sets of tomato seeds, a control group and a group that has been exposed to conditions similar to Mars. Under the supervision of their teacher, students will plant the seeds and observe the plants' progress. At the end of the program, teachers will submit their results online and discover which set of seeds is from out of this world.

Additional teaching resources including lesson plans, activity suggestions and guides are also available for different grade levels.

For more information please visit the *Tomatosphere* website at: www.tomatosphere.org/.

Greenhouse Project Links School with Community



David Thompson Secondary School in Invermere has an exciting new green initiative- the Community Greenhouse Project. It was built on school district property with funding generated by the community through the Columbia Valley Botanical Gardens & Centre for Sustainable Living. This unique partnership is a learning lab and a food source for students and the community!

To manage the facility and to work with all K-12 schools in the district, a Greenhouse education coordinator has been hired to support the initiative. Students will be able to find out more about food production and healthy food choices through various programs. For example, participants will learn how to grow and harvest fresh organic food for the school's Chef Training program. Plans are also underway to use the facility for a new Horticulture trades training program beginning next school year.

The Greenhouse is also a place to learn about sustainability issues like energy efficiency, water conservation and food security. Constructed using leading edge design, it incorporates the latest in energy and water conservation technology.

For example, heat from the summer is captured and stored in the ground during the school year so the greenhouse will use no fossil fuels even in the midst of winter. Solar panels will also produce electricity that can be sold back to the power grid. A rain water collection system will capture water from the school roof and school grounds, stored in underground tanks for use in a closed-loop water system.

To learn about this project contact Joanne Bragg at David Thompson Secondary School, Joanne.Bragg@sd6.bc.ca.



Online Tool for Greater Collaboration in Curriculum Development

Did you know that the some teachers in B.C. are using online tools in creative ways to help develop curriculum support materials?

Working with various education partners in the province and the BC Association of Mathematics Teachers (BCAMT), the Education Standards Unit (ESU) at the Ministry of Education has launched a pilot using Wikispaces to develop curriculum materials for Math 8 and 9.

It is hoped that the online collaboration tool will help facilitate greater communication and input from educators from around the province, allowing as many teachers to contribute to the curriculum materials as possible. Several educators created the base content of the Math CAM wiki. The wiki site is now open to the public for input, accessible through the [BCAMT website](#). The pilot team hopes that more members from the education community will contribute to the Math CAM wiki.

Depending on the feedback and success of the pilot, the Ministry would like to use the collaborative approach of the wiki site to facilitate development of curriculum and curriculum support in the future.

Check out the Mathematics 8 and 9 Classroom Assessment Model at <http://bcmath89cam.wikispaces.com/>.

Language & Literacy Graduate Program for Grades 5-8 Teachers

The University of Victoria (UVic) is offering a unique opportunity to Grades five to eight educators in Language and Literacy through its Middle Years Language and Literacy graduate program. The program is specifically designed to meet the needs of teachers, literacy coordinators and school administrators who wish to further their knowledge of pedagogical issues and practices in today's middle schools.

Working in a cohort of professionals, participants will spend the month of July on campus and fall/spring learning online. Teachers who successfully complete four courses will be qualified for a Graduate Professional Certificate (GPC). All these courses can then be applied to a M.Ed. if participants decide to continue.

For more information please contact Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education at 250-721-7875 (dbegoray@uvic.ca).