

British Columbia Exchange Teachers' Association

October 2016

BCExchangeTeachers.ca

A big Welcome/Bienvenue

We are pleased to welcome 6 exchange teachers from Scotland, France, Switzerland, and Australia. These exchange teachers join the 12 Australian teachers who have been working in the province since January. The BC Exchange Teachers' Association hopes that these teachers have a wonderful professional and personal experience while in British Columbia.

We are looking into hosting events for both former and current exchange teachers to attend. Please see below on how you can get involved in our organization.

We will be launching a new website in the near future. This will provide members and potential exchange teachers a place to view the activities of the association. Remember to bookmark <http://www.bcexchangeteachers.ca/>

GETTING INVOLVED

At this time, the Executive and activities of the BC Exchange Teachers' Association are mainly located in the Lower Mainland. The new Executive would like to improve on that by bringing information sessions to various areas of the province. We are planning to hold sessions in the lower mainland, on Vancouver Island and Kelowna in the upcoming months, carrying on the good work that Carol Wilkins from CEEF did for many years ([see page 5](#)). To this end, the Executive would welcome your assistance and involvement. If you are interested in presenting an information session in your area, either a weekend/evening/after school or a Professional Development Day session with your local union, contact [Catherine Gagnon](#).

Help us plan our calendar of events - Do you have an idea for an activity that exchange teachers might be interested in and could travel to without too much difficulty? It could be a skiing event in the interior over a long weekend, winery tour, whale watching, hiking trips, a corn maze, hosting a BBQ or potluck, or even a walking tour of your town or city. We are open to all suggestions. If you have an idea and would like to help out, please contact [Catherine Gagnon](#).

The current executive for the BCETA is:

Past President:

Kulwant Toor - ktoor@shaw.ca

Vice-President/Communications Chair:

Catherine Gagnon - cteachr@hotmail.com

Treasurer:

Pearl Wong - pearlw576@gmail.com

Members at large:

Leon Jensen, Martin Wheeler

About Us

BCETA is a volunteer organization dedicated to hosting information sessions and social activities with the intent to make the year an exciting and memorable one for exchange teachers and their families.

<http://BCExchangeTeachers.ca>

Our association is made up of former exchange teachers who are delighted to share their experience with current exchangees. We welcome any questions or comments you might have regarding all matters related to your teaching exchange.

Happy World Teacher Day! October 5th!

This is second issue of BCExchangeTeachers.ca. I hope you will enjoy the information and stories about teaching exchanges happening throughout the province. Please submit your own pictures, links and stories to me at cteachr@hotmail.com.



Check out the [Bald Eagle Festival in Fraser Valley](#)

Newsletter Editor: Catherine Gagnon
cteachr@hotmail.com

Now available – newsletters from CLEE (Canadian League for Education Exchange) and other Australian International Teaching Fellowships <http://feb122010.wordpress.com>

Coming Events

Dec	Traditional Christmas dinner/ farewell to our Southern Hemisphere teachers
Jan	Welcome to Southern Hemisphere Exchangees
Feb	Welcome Back Canadians
April	Potluck dinner Lower Mainland
May	Victoria Conference Weekend
June	Farewell to Northern Hemisphere Exchangees
Sept	BBQ and welcome to new and returning exchangees.
Oct	
Nov	



Our friend Sara, exchangee from Scotland to Australia in 2011 met up with a very famous Canadian at Vancouver Pride while visiting with us this summer.

Suggested Activities

- Visit the Fairmont Empress – One to the best known landmarks in Victoria. Their high tea is renowned. Prices vary by season, so you might plan a visit in the fall or winter months. [Tea at the Fairmont Empress](#)
- Stanley Park is the iconic outdoor destination in Vancouver. Explore the seawall on foot or cycle, the First Nations' totems are always a great photo-op and don't miss the Aquarium. [Download a self-guided tour here.](#)
- BC is well known for its wildlife and outdoor adventures. [Here is a list of ideas to help you plan.](#)
- Get ready for some harvest fun at one of the many festivals and markets around the province. You might enjoy [the Okanagan Fall Wine Festival](#), or the Fort Langley [Cranberry Festival](#) held on October 8th this year.
- The [Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival](#) is being held in November. It sounds like a great Sunday drive to Harrison Hot Springs.
- If you love winter and can't wait, start planning a ski weekend to [Manning Park Resort](#).
- Closer to Vancouver, you can enjoy the awesome sights from [Grouse Mountain](#) on the Skyride. If you hurry, you can have breakfast with the bears, now on until October 9.
- Plan ahead to visit [Vancouver's Christmas Market](#) held Nov 26 to Dec 30.
- Living on the island? [Consult this guide](#) for a list of festivals and events.

BCETA BBQ – September 2016

By Rick Mulholland and Bob Cunningham

The evening of September 17th found us enjoying a wonderful barbeque at the home of Mel and June Caldwell. It was a great evening of socializing and an opportunity to get reacquainted with those we had met before and to meet some newcomers as well.

The first of those to arrive was Jennifer, who is recently back from her year in Australia. She had many tales to tell of how special Australia is and how challenging she found her students. Fortunately, she has the right mix of Canadian cool and just enough wit and wisdom to have found her year a satisfying adventure.

We were all impressed with the arrival of Clementine, who prefers Clem, as she used transit to get from New Westminster to Langley, a feat most of us wouldn't attempt. Clem is from Lille, France, where it is very flat, and commutes every day by bicycle from New West to North Delta, which is very hilly. We were entertained by her take on teaching in Canada, and she left any number of people a wee bit jealous in regard to the working conditions for teachers in France. Just don't mention anything about Huskies!

A big thank you to Mel and June for sharing their lovely home and providing us with such good food. We hope to see everyone who was at the barbeque and many others at other functions throughout the year.



Clem, Lawrence & Jennifer



The master at work



Jennifer and Meghan



Our hosts, Mel and June

Exchange Experience in BC August 2015-2016

By Lukas Fischer

This was my second exchange. Thirty-odd years ago, my father got the opportunity to participate in an international exchange program in the United States and so I spent the 3rd year of elementary school in Columbus, Georgia. It was a very interesting experience and motivated me to try to set up another exchange, this time in the active role of an exchange teacher.

At my "home" school in Switzerland, students can sign up to a bilingual program and there I teach math in English. This facilitated the exchange a lot as an exchange teacher would not have to be proficient in German but could teach in her/his native tongue. With the help of the Canadian Education Exchange Foundation, a match could be made. After a lot of preparatory exchange by e-mail, the Canadian family flew to Switzerland first and we had the chance to spend a few days together: it was nice to meet in person and exchange information and material face to face.

Our daughters aged 11, 9 and 7 only had some, very little and no knowledge of English at all before the exchange. Luckily, we arrived in Victoria early in August, had enough time to settle in and get to know the house and the surroundings and familiarize ourselves with the new appliances. During this time, we visited Vancouver and made a trip to Tofino. Then, in early September, school started and after a few hiccups the girls settled in well. We appreciated a lot the kind support of the teachers who made it easy for the girls to be able to follow their classes.



Parklands SS Science Staff

The school I taught at was located in Sidney, a commute of roughly 25 kilometers. At Parkland Secondary School, about 600 students are taught. The school is proud to host a strong international program, a Hockey Academy and a Marine Science program among many other special features. The teaching staff was very welcoming and helped me to settle in quickly and to familiarize myself with all things that were new to me: taking attendance with BCEsis, the different grading system, and many other things. ([continued on next page](#))



l-r: Debbie (NSW), Brad (WA), Lukas and Lizanne (Principal, Parklands SS)



Grade 11 Calculus class

The staff organized quite a few social activities, the May Long weekend camping trip to [Sombrio Beach](#) was my personal favorite among many other events. Parkland staff manages to uphold an incredible mixture between a collegiate and funny tone among the staff itself and a very professional and supportive attitude towards the students.

Of course, the math taught in Canada is the same as in Switzerland, nevertheless there were some differences: class size and the number of lessons taught in Canada are considerably higher. The students are not streamed as in Switzerland, what resulted in students struggling at different levels. I was glad that my exchange partner had left a lot of material so I knew what skills the student should master in each course and my teaching colleagues were as patient and helpful when I encountered other obstacles I couldn't figure out myself.

In the holidays we traveled, here the absolute highlights were skiing on Grouse Mountain and the Jasper and Banff National Parks.

It has been a very intense, interesting and plain awesome year for the whole family. We have been fortunate to meet so many wonderful people and we hope to stay in touch!



Sunset view from Grouse Mountain



From left – Carol Wilkins, Leon, June & Mel, Pearl (BCETA Treasurer)

Saying So long to Carol!

By Catherine Gagnon

We were pleased to host Carol Wilkins at our home recently. You may know that Carol recently retired from CEEF after a great number of years as the exchange coordinator for Ontario, BC and some maritime provinces. We will miss Carol very much. She has promised to stay involved with teacher exchanges and will be serving on the board of CEEF. The evening was an opportunity for an informal chat about the past and future of teaching exchanges in BC.

An enduring romance

In 2011, I exchanged to Bendigo, Australia. My exchange partner Donna brought her then 19 yr old daughter along for the year. Rowie fell in love with Canada. Five years later, she returned to North America with her fiancé to marry in NYC and honeymoon at some of her favourite North American destinations. She and her parents still feel that Canada is their second home. Her mother, Donna, managed to have a great reunion with many of her teaching colleagues at St. Matthew HS where she taught in 2011.

To me, this is the essence of our experience during our teaching exchange. Till next issue...

Catherine