

British Columbia Exchange Teachers' Association

June 2018

BCExchangeTeachers@gmail.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The **Victoria Spring Conference** was the best one yet! We had 6 exchange teachers and their families join us for a weekend of school tours, visits to the BC Ministry of Education and the BC Parliament buildings, as well as a guided walking tour of some of the better known Victoria sights. Please see the [write up and pictures of the weekend here](#).

I want to highlight the organizational feat this year's conference was. Starting with making contacts with the BC Ministry of Education, finding new schools to host our exchange teachers for a morning tour and the cooperation of all the principals who allow release time for the teachers to come to, in my view, the most important professional development opportunity BCETA offers during the exchange year.

This year, in an effort to make the professional conversation flow, I asked the attendees to consider some questions and discuss them at our Min of Education visit. I think we were able to hear what BC Education is doing really well. Some of the highlights were the autonomy the teachers felt in their BC classrooms and the opportunity to interact more fully with their students in student-lead parent teacher interviews.

During the school tours, the teachers were very impressed with our French Immersion students and how well they were able to function in French at even the kindergarden level. Thank you Jessica Koski and Alan Barwin for providing those precious glimpses into our unique Canadian education system.

Our Northern Hemisphere exchange teachers are on their final month of teaching in Canada and will be travelling home in a few short weeks.

We hope you had an amazing year and will stay in touch with our Association!



BRITISH COLUMBIA
EXCHANGE TEACHERS'
ASSOCIATION

About Us

The BC Exchange Teachers' Association 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.

GETTING INVOLVED

At this time, the Executive and activities of the BC Exchange Teachers' Association are mainly located in the Lower Mainland. The Association would like to improve on that by bringing information sessions to various areas of the province.

To this end, we 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](#). We would also be glad to make a presentation to a small group at your request.

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:

President/Communications Chair:

Catherine Gagnon – bcexchangegeteachers@gmail.com

Vice-President

Martin Wheeler - wheeler_m@surreyschools.ca

Treasurer

Kulwant Toor – ktoor@shaw.ca

Secretary

Leon Jensen – Leonj1@hotmail.com

Members at large - Mel and June Caldwell

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 2018-2019

June	Farewell to Northern Hemisphere Exchangees
July-Aug	No events planned. Have a wonderful summer holiday!
Sept	Fraser Valley Day and BBQ
Oct	Information session – Lower Mainland
Nov	Information session – Vancouver Island
Dec	Traditional Christmas dinner/farewell to our Southern Hemisphere teachers
Jan	Welcome to Southern Hemisphere Exchangees/Welcome Back Canadians
April	Potluck dinner Lower Mainland
May	Victoria Conference Weekend Info session Surrey School District

Suggested Activities

- Visit the Fairmont Empress – One of 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.](#)
- Check out a Farmer's Market or a Night Market held all over BC starting as early as May. Find a market close to you [in this directory.](#)
- Living on the island? [Consult this guide](#) for a list of festivals and events.
- Kelowna has some [amazing activities all year round.](#) It's not always about wine you know!
- Kayaking, Surfing, White Water Rafting? [Nelson](#) has all the watersports for you.
- No matter where you are touring in Canada this summer, Parks Canada offers free passes to all youth under 18! **Discovery Passes** offer a great value for those using Parks that charge a daily fee. [Parks Canada passes](#)



Parliament Tour – Front L-R: Janet Mayes, Johanna Smith, Catherine Gagnon, Alyssa Amit (BC Min of Education), Michelle & Peter Quine
Back L-R: Michael & Donna Barton, Mark Steele, Glen & Marion Johnson

BCETA VICTORIA SPRING CONFERENCE May 11-12th

Marion Johnson (Forster, Australia on exchange in the Comox Valley)

A gathering of six Australian teachers and spouses had a wonderful weekend conference in Victoria, organised by the indefatigable Catherine Gagnon. In addition to the two days of professional discussions and sharing of experiences, the weather put on a great display of blue, cloudless skies and T-shirt wearing weather. The Aussies agreed that 17 degrees was warm enough for shorts and T-shirts.

Friday morning began with meetings at French Immersion Quadra Elementary school and Central Middle school where we were greeted by kindergarten teacher, Jessica Koski, and the Principal Topher MacIntosh. Students and teachers at both schools were very welcoming and gave the Australian teachers an insight into the French immersion school system.



The afternoon involved an informative tour of the British Columbian parliament house. What an impressive building, both inside and out. This was followed by a meeting at the Ministry of Education where we were hosted by Dwayne Cover, Provincial Lead – International Education, who presented an informative talk about the BC education system, it's impressive PISA results (Programme for International Student Assessment) and the innovative international student exchange program involving 21,000 students. Additionally, a round table discussion and sharing of experiences illustrated the transformative nature of the exchange experience. Centred around the questions, **“What is one thing from your Canadian classroom that you will be taking back to Australia?”** and **“What is one practice you have been able to integrate very well in your Canadian classroom?”** teachers were in agreement that their teaching practice has been enhanced by the teaching exchange.

The following day, Catherine and her husband Leon took us on a brilliant walking tour of downtown Victoria and Chinatown. Again the weather was stunning reaching highs in the mid 20's. A Scottish bagpipe march in front of the Empress and the parliament was an excellent touch – thanks Catherine for organising this!
([continued](#) next page)



Chinatown Tour – the group attentively listening to Leon Jensen, our BCETA tour guide.

(Continued)

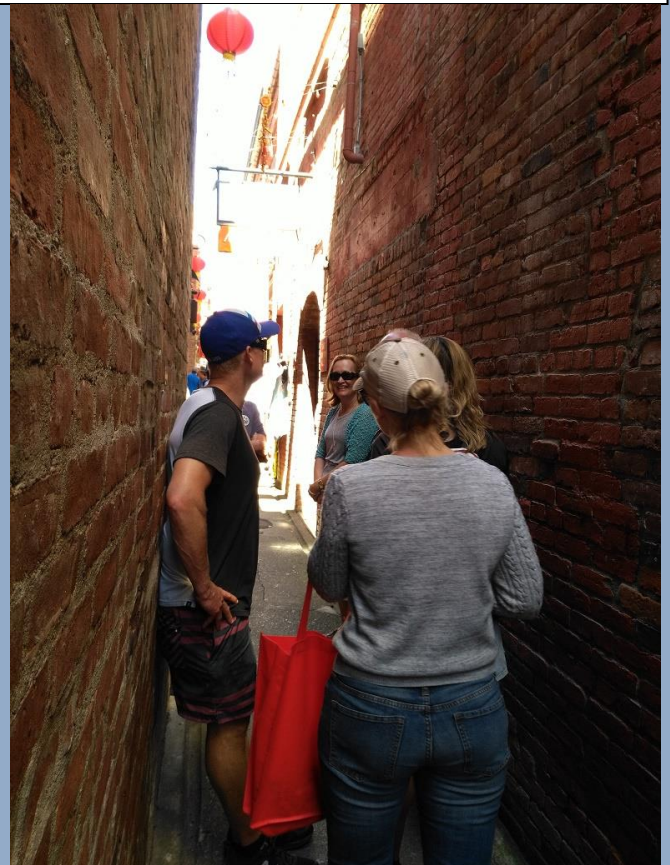
Finally, the Food Trucks, the Irish Times pub, Frankie’s Diner and The Drake Eatery were great dining choices.

On behalf of the Australian exchange teachers, Janet Mayes, Donna Barton, Johanna Smith, Mark Steele and Peter Quine, along with their spouses, we thank Catherine Gagnon and Leon Jensen for the informative and wonderful experience of the Teacher Exchange Conference in Victoria.

Touring the parliament buildings.



BC Min of Education presentation lead by Dwayne Cover. Thanks to Alyssa Amit for facilitating this. Pictured below: the narrowest street, Chinatown.



Visitors from Australia

By Catherine Gagnon, President BCETA

Our involvement with teaching exchanges didn't stop after our conference ended. Our friends from Australia, Mary Moore and Adam Smith arrived the day the conference came to a close. Mary is the President of the ITA ([Victorian International Teachers' Association](#)), the equivalent to the BC Exchange Teachers' Association in Victoria, Australia. She and I are in constant communication, working hard to promote teaching exchanges in our countries. We first met in Ontario when she was on exchange in 2014.

Since we were already in touring mode, Leon and I showed them around some of our favourite Vancouver Island sights, starting with a drive to [Cathedral Grove \(Macmillan Provincial Park\)](#) for a view of the old growth trees. From there we stopped at [Rathrevor Beach Provincial Park](#), where the tide goes out almost 1 km. If you like to camp or enjoy a beach day on the island, this BC Park is a must see!

The next day, we planned to tour [Fort Langley National Historic site](#) and then meet up with some friends for a pub dinner. We were surprised to meet our local MP (John Aldag) at the Fort, just as he was about to make an important announcement about French education in BC. What an amazing coincidence to be there at that moment and meet so many of the local stakeholders in French education, including the school trustee for Fraser Valley (CSF), the President of Canadian Parents for French in BC & Yukon and the President of La Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique. The announcement was made on our Federal government's plan to address the need for increased facilities and teachers generated by ever-increasing demand for French and FSL education.

Our friend Mary was delighted to be part of the conversation and added the Australian perspective to French Immersion education in Melbourne.

The importance of this unexpected moment serves to highlight opportunities for French teachers who would like to go on exchange either to other countries such as France and even Australia, or inter-provincially (an aspect we hope to increase in coming years).

Mary and Adam left BC to carry on their vacation in the Yukon and beyond. We were happy to have seen them after our recent visit in Australia.

Rathrevor Beach Provincial Park shoreline at high tide



Pub Dinner with Mary & Adam



Fort Langley National Historic Site



Letter home

By Janet Mayes (from NSW Australia exchanged to Comox, BC)

Hi Helen,
We've fit in very well to the Canadian culture and like most Canadians we've come to a warm country to defrost and relax. Most people who I teach with were either going to Hawaii or Mexico so we thought we'd try Mexico. The trip to Puerto Vallarta was a direct flight from Comox and we were here in 4 1/2 hours. I am sitting poolside on a lounge chair in the sun writing the promised email. The weather is amazing, not too hot and not too cold. I will include a photo.

We are having a fantastic time and I'm loving Valley View Elementary. I am particularly loving all of the services available to the teachers in District 71 and taking advantage of as many as I can. The support staff here offer so many resources, they plan with you, then come into your class with prepared Lessons and teach alongside you always backing up with further ideas and resources.

So far I've had woodwork training and are about to make I-phone/I-pad holders with my class, I'm booked into a STEM webinar with whole class which will guide them through a hockey goal design project, we are in the middle of a "Business of your own" program where volunteers come into the class from the business community and guide the students (and me) through a 3 week business course where they design, make and sell their own product using upcycled materials. I've also had the curriculum support person come into the class on 3 occasions to model and show the "3 step math process". All that as well as spelling bees, mini Winter Olympics, Australian Day fun, Weenie Wednesday Fundraising. On April 18th and 19th, my class and 2 others are heading to Vancouver for an overnight camp and we get to sleep inside the Aquarium. There is never a dull moment and I'm loving it. I have found Barb Robertson (principal) to be very supportive and relaxed. She's great.

Mick has been having a great time and skiing on average 3 out of 5 weekdays. This year has been a great one for Mt Washington and we have been very spoiled with excellent skiing conditions. I have also done a lot of skiing on the weekends. In between skiing we have also been exploring the beautiful area of the Comox Valley. There is so much to do around the valley and I now know why Mark Steele wanted to come back here as it really is amazing. Now that the ski season is finished (well is finishing on April 8th) we will be doing a lot more cycling, hiking and when the water gets warmer, water sports.

We have had one get together with Mark and Karen Steele and Marion and Glen (I think) and on May 11th we are having our first (and I think only) Exchange Teacher's Conference down in Victoria. I think all couples are coming.

Thank you so much Helen for making this wonderful life experience happen. To think that this time last year we were only just starting to think of Canada when the Wales experience fell through. You really should come over for a visit!

Sending lots of love and lots of gratitude,
Janet and Mick Mayes



Farewell Potluck

By Catherine Gagnon, President, BCETA

Last weekend we had a chance to say goodbye to our Northern Hemisphere Exchange Teachers, Anna Herrick from the UK and Larisa Pankevich from Germany.

Our executive committee met to discuss our upcoming events and then we were joined by Anna and Larisa for a yummy potluck dinner.

Within 5 minutes, the conversation was so lively that I couldn't have gotten a word in edgewise had I even tried to offer a cold drink.

We heard all about their summer travel plans, what they most loved about their year in Canada, how teaching differed here from in their own country, and most of all, we heard appreciation for the opportunity to be part of our exchange community for this year.

Anna and Larisa participated in many of our events this year. Unfortunately, neither of them were able to attend the Victoria Conference, but I know they will read the details in this newsletter avidly, just as they asked many questions about how the conference went.

Mel and June Caldwell from our Executive were able to present the ladies with a small token from Canada and I can't tell you how excited and gracious they were about the presentation.

We will miss our lovely exchange teachers but we assured them that they are always welcomed to visit us when they come back to Canada. We even tried to convince them to perhaps stay and work in Canada permanently.

So long, Auf Wiedersehen, till we meet again.



L-R: Leon, Kulwant, Catherine, Mel, June, Anna & Larisa

Visitors

From the NSW Exchange Teachers League Newsletter

The summer months saw some former exchangees heading Down Under to enjoy the warm weather and to catch up with friends.

ETL members were happy to meet with Catherine Gagnon and her husband Leon Jensen. Catherine and Leon are former exchanges to Victoria and Catherine is now President of the British Columbia Exchange Teachers Association.



A visit to the IEU (International Education Union) office
Hosted by Helen Gregory, second from right.



Dinner at Spice Alley with members of the NSW ETL. Gayle Hernandez (Port Coquitlam), currently on exchange in Neutral Bay on right front of the picture.



Australian Alumni Reception – May 9, 2018

On Wednesday, May 9th, my husband Brad and I made our way down to the Pan Pacific Hotel in Vancouver to gather with other Australian Alumni. Immediately upon arriving at the event, we were offered a lovely glass of Australian's finest white or red wine. We mingled and shared stories about the beautiful country of Australia. Amongst the people we spoke with, we met Mr. Kevin Lamb (Post Manager and Honorary Consul in Vancouver) and the bubbly Ms. Natasha Smith (The Australian High Commissioner to Canada). It was a wonderful evening, reminiscing about a place that captured our hearts in 2011.

Sue Nickason (International Teaching Fellow, Victoria, Australia, 2011)

Grade 2

Mountain Meadows Elementary School

The Honorary Consul encouraged everyone to keep up with the activities of Australian Alumni at canada.embassy.gov.au.



The [Australia in Canada Facebook](#) page is another way to keep informed on events relating to the Australian High Commission.

There's more online!

If you follow Facebook, you'll find pages for some great groups and blogs –

- [CEEF Discussion Group](#) – for Canadian exchange teachers and potential exchanges, this group was set up to allow interested parties to ask and answer questions about their exchange year and preparation leading up to it. Very rich in information. If you've been on exchange from Ontario, BC or the Maritimes, you have worked with the CEEF. Just ask to join.
- [ITA](#) – for exchange teachers to Victoria, AU (past and present)
- [Turning my world Upside Down](#) – read my own exchange adventures and find links to newsletters from other teaching exchange organizations.
- [CLEECanada](#) has [website](#) and [blog](#) for exchange teachers in Ontario and BC. The blog also has stories and links for teachers currently exchanging to BC. Many new links have been added from teachers currently on exchange. Wonderful inspiration!
- **We are happy to receive your questions at bcexchangeteachers@gmail.com**



Victoria all lit up – Victoria Conference Weekend 2018