

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This past September, we welcomed 4 exchange teachers from the US, France, Quebec and Australia. In January 2019, we have an additional 6 teachers arriving from Australia. Teachers are located mostly in the lower mainland and on Vancouver Island, with some in the interior.

The BC Exchange Teachers' Association hopes that these teachers have a wonderful professional and personal experience while in British Columbia.

Our Association's main objective this year is to promote the exchange program across the province. This will be done by hosting a number of social gatherings in various locations. Upcoming events on the lower mainland include a 5 Pin Bowling Night early in February (date still to be determined) and a Curling Bonspiel later the same month. ([see calendar of events](#))

The CEEF has a new coordinator this year, Kim Sturge. Kim is an experienced teacher and exchange alumni herself. She brings a lot of enthusiasm and a willingness to be in contact with as many exchangees as possible. And by the magic of technology, we have been able to meet virtually.

BCETA is planning a Welcome conference in late January. The intention is to have all exchangees join us either in person or via video conferencing. Our guests will include our CEEF coordinator, a representative from the BC Teachers' Federation, along with exchange alumni and their spouse to discuss a host of subjects that are of interest to the new arrivals. This will be a chance to ask those burning questions like what a snowday is and how to get yourself to school on a wintery day.



After a very successful weekend in Victoria last May, we intend to repeat this event in 2019. If you would like to participate in the organization of the Victoria Conference, please [contact us](#) as soon as possible.

The current executive for the BCETA is:

President/Communications Chair:

Catherine Gagnon – bcexchangeteachers@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, Kathleen Lopez, Sandra Willing

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. <http://BCExchangeTeachers.ca>

Welcome to BC! 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.

MOOSEMILK

The Ritual...

At least once in every port, the moose runs loose, so party time begins with a toast of Moosemilk, a Canadian tradition, only in Canada you say.

So don your moose hat and shirt, toast your NATO friends and let them see what a friendly salty moose you are... **Cheers!**

The Recipe...

3 L Milk
3 L Vanilla Ice Cream
3 Teaspoons Vanilla

12 oz Kaluha
12 oz Brandy
40 oz Dark Rum
4 Cups of Crushed or Cubed Ice.

Mix half of the ingredients and stir for 5 minutes. Add remaining ingredients, stir for 5 minutes and serve.
Make 40 - 80z. servings.

Note: If participants are not enjoying themselves during second serving, add more liquor.

"The Moose Is Loose"

[Read all about our BCETA Christmas Dinner here.](#)

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](#).

Newsletter Editor: Catherine Gagnon

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

Coming Events

Jan 27	Welcome to Southern Hemisphere Exchangees/Welcome Back Canadians
Feb 16	Curling Bonspiel Lower Mainland
Mar 2	5 Pin Bowling
April	Potluck dinner Lower Mainland
May	Victoria Conference Weekend
June	Farewell to Northern Hemisphere Exchangees
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

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.](#)
- If you love winter and can't wait, start planning a ski weekend to [Manning Park Resort](#). Or consider a Whistler weekend in April when the prices drop.
- Closer to Vancouver, you can enjoy the awesome sights from [Grouse Mountain](#) on the Skyride. Try your hand at skiing or snowboarding.
- Skiing is also available on Vancouver Island at [Mount Washington](#).
- Living on the island? [Consult this guide](#) for a list of festivals and events.
- Kelowna has some [amazing activities during the winter months](#). It's not always about wine you know!
- Enjoy the snow and winter activities in the [Canadian Rockies](#).

Excited exchange teachers prepare for year away

From the IEU Newsmoth (NSW, Australia)

Those teachers lucky enough to have landed an exchange position for 2019 gathered together in September at the Teacher Exchange Conference to swap notes and get advice on living and teaching overseas.

This year IEU is sending 16 NSW/ACT Branch teachers to Canada. There are no UK or USA exchanges. Two IEU WA members are also heading to Canada.

Destinations include Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and New Brunswick, and subjects being taught by high school teachers include PE, Science, Industrial Technology and English, with eight positions for primary teachers.

During the conference, teachers learned about teaching in Canada, dealing with the weather, tax and other logistical issues and they swap details with their fellow exchangees.



Mark Steele in his Comox backyard in January 2018

No stranger to exchange, Canadian Colin Tinga was on hand to give some useful advice on what to expect in Canada.

From British Columbia, Tinga is on his second exchange to Australia at the same school and with the same teacher. He swapped his PE role with Mark Steele at Central Coast Grammar School in 2013, and again this year.

Tinga said the first time he came on exchange he sat back a little, learning the ropes about how the department was run, how assessments were carried out and how scheduling was approached.

This time round Tinga said he felt more confident to get involved, as he is head of the athletics department in Canada. He's been contributing ideas about how to approach excursions and events and structure assessments.

"The whole exchange process is professional development as soon as you apply. How you approach the kids and interact with them is the same in both countries, but how the learning experience is structured, how it is assessed, that is new experience," he said.

And Mark Steele, Colin's exchange partner, concurs!

"If you had an opportunity to repeat one your lives best experiences, would you? For sure, so for me that was exactly the case of my second exchange to Canada.



Mark Steele in Yosemite National Park, USA

I had been home for four years from my previous exchange in 2013. Constantly memories of my time away on Vancouver Island (Comox Valley) would occupy my thoughts, particularly the mental list I made myself of the things I would do if I ever returned. I had to go back.

Mark and Colin will be returning to their respective homes and jobs in January 2019.

Bald Eagle Festival

Pictures and captions by Kathleen Collord Lopez (UK 2017-18)

On Sunday, November 18th, Ian and I joined some friends to check out the Bald Eagle Festival at Harrison Mills. It was a beautiful autumn day to be walking through the forest and along the river to see the bald eagles. The salmon have recently come upstream and spawned which provides a huge feast for them. It was a lovely day.



Kathleen, Ian and friends at the Bald Eagle Festival in mid November.



Harrison Mills along the Fraser River

Christmas Pub and Farewell to our Island Aussies



On December 6, we managed to catch up with our islanders one more time. Mark and Karen Steele, Peter Quine and our interprovincial exchangee from Quebec, Josée Blanchard (and hubby Charles) joined Leon and I, as well as our local relatives, for a Christmas meal. Notably absent were Janet and Mick Mayes who had to return home early due to a family tragedy. We send our very best wishes to you and hope we meet again!

Josée will be continuing her exchange in the BC French School district (CSF). We look forward to reading some good stories about her exchange year.

BCETA Christmas Dinner

By Martin Wheeler and Catherine Gagnon

Our Third Annual BC Exchange Teachers' Association Christmas Gathering was a big success! Here's the speech our host, Martin, never got the chance to read.

Thank you all for coming to the 3rd instalment of the BCETA Christmas party. We're back at the location of our very first party, the clubhouse, after maxing out the dining space at my townhouse last year. Taking everyone except Leon, who was the only one there the first year in the clubhouse, back to the night, it was a cold and snowy night and I'd built a snowman out the front door clad in hockey gear for what I hoped would be a quintessentially Canadian photo-ops. Unfortunately only one Australia family and the aforementioned Leon made it to the Christmas party due to winter driving conditions that, if you think Vancouverites have a reputation for being freaked out by, you should try Australians! Despite the low numbers, a great time was had by all (thanks in some ways to Leon's famous moose milk) and we even resorted to posing with the family on the wall behind me to make it look like the party was better attended.



Christmas 2016 – Cardboard family filling in for the family from France who were snowbound in Mission.

Fast forward to this year and we've got our all-time attendance record! We've got teachers and families on exchange from Colorado, USA (Go Avs or Broncos) and Australia (Aussie Aussie Aussie). Recently returned and, for some what must feel like a lifetime ago returned teachers (Kulwant) make up our Canadian guests including exchanges to France, Australia and England. Why I mention all this besides as a way of introducing people is our numbers are growing and that is a very good thing when Exchange Teaching opportunities to places like the UK are in decline. To counter this, we need to continue to gather like this and share all the good and the bad, for me trying to wrangle 24 grade 4 Australian private school boys, that comes out of our year on exchange. Talk it up here and when you get home with your colleagues as a way to promote and grown a teaching experience like no other (and don't forget to mention the real reason for going...the travel opportunities just like the real reason for getting into teaching...the holidays).

OK that's enough of my plug for exchange teaching, I don't need to sell it to you, you're here and we're back. Finally then I'd just like to again thank everyone for coming and sharing some of your Christmas food with everyone and spreading some Christmas cheer. On that note, Cheers!!

Donna and Mick from NSW where on their way home at the end of December. We were able to give them a small token from the BCETA. It was also nice to welcome Kathleen Lopez home from the UK, as well as meet Sandra Willing, on exchange in 2017 in AU. The usual suspect were there. The moose milk flowed, the hot cider warmed us and the traditional foods (including a pavlova) we enjoyed by all.



Donna Barton, Catherine Gagnon and Donna's husband Mick



Martin and his daughter sample the food, Leon and Sandra in the background



Cathy from Colorado chats with Kulwant, one of our BCETA past presidents.



Audrey (France 2016-17) and Kathleen's mother in law who joined them in the UK last year.



Leon with Nee Wheeler, our hostess



The Christmas merrymakers!

A Postcard from Donna Barton

Yellowknife!! We wanted to see snow again and Yellowknife delivered!! It's on the 60th parallel, 400km from the Arctic circle. The closest to Santa we've ever been!! Our flight was delayed and we had an unexpected night's layover in Edmonton. Then onto Yellowknife! We had to de-ice the plane before we took off and when we landed we had to walk on the icy tarmac - it was a bit cold!!! Walking through the streets was magical and so quiet... We could hear our footsteps on the snow! So many shades of silver/grey/white - spectacular!! It was **minus 8°C**, but our Canada Goose kept us warm! It can get as low as -40, consistently in February!! A record of -51°C.... From the Northern lights, dog sledding, slaphooting a puck and winter wonderland walks.... Thank you Yellowknife!! You were spectacularly awesome!!!! Canada we are going to miss you..

Donna Barton has been teaching in Burnaby during 2018. She is from NSW.

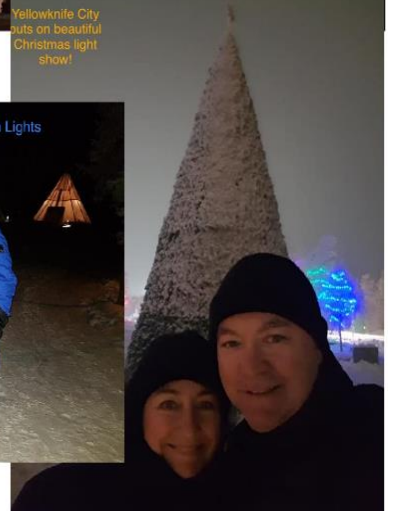


Northern Lights

Yellowknife City puts on beautiful Christmas light show!



Aurora Village waiting for the Northern Lights



A Postcard from the NWT

Love,
Donna & Mick



Dog Sledding was very peaceful

Whether you're on your way home or on your way to Canada this Holiday Season, The BCETA wishes you All the Best of the Season!