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March 7, 2008



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Hello Everyone,

On Saturday March 8, 2008 it is the 31st International Women's Day. Why not take this opportunity to reflect on the achievements of women in British Columbia and recognize the achievements and efforts of the women in our lives. The theme for this year is 'strong women, strong world' a powerful theme that speaks volumes of the power of one. Someone encouraged me to run as a school trustee years ago. Shortly after that I was convinced to run for provincial office. If someone would have even suggested 10 years ago that I would be the Deputy Premier and a member of cabinet in the B.C. Government I would never have believed them. Now I try to encourage other women to be bold and consider all the possibilities and even some they can't imagine at this point in their lives.

Speaking of strong and amazing women, last Saturday March 1, 2008 my husband Bill and I along with over 2,000 other TimberWolves fans crowded into the Northern Sports Centre to watch our UNBC girls' basketball team beat Camosun College to take home the Championship banner. We will proudly display the championship banner in the TimberWolves' new home at the Sports Centre where I'm proud to say they've gone undefeated. I would like to send special recognition to Laurel

government.

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Useful Phone numbers

BC Nurse line: 24 hour,
Toll free 1-866-215-4700

Pharma Net Hotline: Mon-Fri
(8:30-4:30pm) 1-800-387-4700

Health Info Line: Mon-Fri
(8:30-4:30pm) 1-800-465-4911

Victim Link: 7 days a week,
24 hours, 1-800-563-0808

Wallace the Tournament MVP and Jaclyn Nazareno the Tournament All-Star. Both girls are 4th year Arts Major students at UNBC, congratulations girls. The team's coach Lorilyn Murdoch who also deserves acknowledgment for her hard work with the team and for her dedication to the women's program since 1997. Thanks also to the rest of the coaching staff. I was happy to announce this amazing feat in the Legislature this week on behalf of my colleagues Pat and John. Check out <http://www.leg.bc.ca/hansard/38th4th/H80303p.htm> to see the Hansard transcript.

Tomorrow, I hope you will all return to UNBC to see our best and brightest up and coming scientists showcasing their projects at the Central Interior Science Exhibition. I can't wait to see the results of countless hours of brainstorming, research and experimentation. Good luck to all participants and some of you may even have the chance to represent B.C. at the Canada Wide Science Exhibition like Connor Hoekstra did last year with his experiment "Project Poker". From there someone will earn the right to represent Canada at an International Science Fair.

I am proud to say that our Canadian representatives at the International Science Fair in Taiwan this year were two students from Northern B.C. Kimmie Gulevich from Fort St. John who won third place in the Environmental Science Category for her project *Biodiesel: Does it Make Cents?* And Brian Le from Prince George who won third place in the Medicine and Health Science Category for his project *Blood Brain Barrier Breached*. Congratulations Kimmie and Brian!

Last Saturday was a big day in my role as Minister of Education as we launched Education Month in the province. Last year we had Education Week, but we have too much to celebrate and so we decided to proclaim an entire month as Education Month. There are numerous special events during the month, so why not visit our new online calendar at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/edmonth/col/details.php>

and also browse through our student Art Gallery.

I can't think of a better way to begin Education Month than cheering on our terrific young spellers at the CanSpell Regional Spelling Bee last Saturday. We started out with 39 spellers from across Central and Northern British Columbia and over the course of the day those 39 spellers became 12. Those 12 then became a group of 7, then a group of 3 and finally there were 2. I am so proud of all the spellers and after a day of sitting on the edge of my seat and holding my breath, I was glad when it got down to the final two. Not only were they exceptional spellers but they were both from Prince George! We all sat in painful silence as Ahsen Chaudrey from College Heights Secondary and Breanna Siemens from John McInnis Jr. Secondary competed for the scholarship funds, the trip to Ottawa, the trophy and the title of best speller in Central and Northern British Columbia! Great job to the two spellers and congratulations to Breanna Siemens for winning the CanSpell Regional Spelling Bee and good luck in Ottawa. We'll all be cheering for you back home in Prince George.

As we continue through Education Month be sure find ways to recognize a special teacher, classroom assistant, janitor, secretary, principal, superintendent, bus driver, trustee or anyone else who has made your learning experience a great one. Premier Campbell and I got the opportunity to recognize 20 British Columbian teachers for their excellent work this week with the first Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence. We hope that you will find a way to recognize those excellent people who contribute so much to the education system in your community.

Until next week,

Shirley

Question of the week:

WHAT NEW RESEARCH FUND WILL ASSIST WITH AIR QUALITY RESEARCH?

The government of British Columbia will be investing \$600,000 over three years to advance air quality research through the new B.C. Clean Air Research (CLEAR) Fund. Sound scientific research is one of the greatest assets in our effort to protect and improve air quality across British Columbia. By gaining a better understanding of the effects of air quality on our health and on the environment, we will be able to provide more effective and realistic solutions to reduce air pollution across the province. The B.C. CLEAR Fund will support diverse and innovative research to address the challenges of air quality protection and the need to reduce the negative effects of air pollution. It will provide a forum for members of the scientific community, environmental organizations, government and industry to advance the science of air quality management by fostering the creation and strengthening of cross-sector partnerships. This will in turn encourage the development of innovative approaches to air quality issues.

Administered by the Fraser Basin Council, the program will be managed by a steering committee made up of representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Metro Vancouver and Environment Canada. The committee will be in charge of reviewing proposals, and monitoring and evaluating the progress and results of projects funded through the CLEAR Fund. It is anticipated that communities and industries will be able to design more effective clean-air solutions as a result of the findings. Research projects financed through the CLEAR Fund will help identify air pollutants at their source and provide realistic solutions to reduce emissions. Projects will also explore the impacts of air pollution on human health and the environment, and contribute to a better understanding of the conditions associated with poor air quality – including factors outside our control, such as topography and weather.

For details on the B.C. CLEAR Fund, please visit the program's website at

www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/programs/clear.html.

For more information on the provincial government's initiatives to improve and protect air quality, visit

www.env.gov.bc.ca/pac/airquality.htm.

News Around the Province

\$209 MILLION TO ENHANCE B.C.'S ARTS AND CULTURE

The Province is investing \$209 million to support arts and culture across British Columbia. Art is essential in communicating and preserving the history, heritage and culture that define us as a province. The cultural infrastructure this investment creates will provide opportunities for British Columbians to get involved with and experience arts and culture in their community and across the province. We are recognized across the country and we want to be sure

British Columbians share in the artistic treasury that is right here at home. The \$209 million in provincial funding will support three initiatives: \$150 million to create the BC150 Cultural Fund; \$50 million for an expansion of the Vancouver Art Gallery; and \$9 million to restore and revitalize the Vancouver East Cultural Centre.

The \$150-million BC150 Cultural Fund will provide long-term, stable funding for a wide range of arts and cultural activities in communities across the province. The initial \$150 million will be invested, with interest earned on the principal to fund arts and cultural activities in the years ahead. Establishment of the BC150 Cultural Fund clearly demonstrates the government's confidence in the contribution of the arts and cultural community throughout British Columbia to achieving the strategic priorities of the Province. A strong arts and cultural infrastructure is an important part of our economic and social future. The increase of support and improvement of infrastructure will reinforce our international reputation. It enhances opportunities for residents and visitors alike. This expansion of the Vancouver Art Gallery will allow for major, impressive national and international exhibits, and attract more tourists, thus helping us in our goal to double tourism revenues by 2015.

Funding for the Vancouver Art Gallery will contribute to establishing a new facility. This is in addition to \$603,000 in operating funds provided by government through the BC Arts Council in 2007.

The gallery is currently located in the old court house in Robson Square, well-known to British Columbians for its heritage and visual appeal. However, annual attendance has more than doubled since 1997, putting pressure on the existing space, as does the need to house a growing collection of artworks. A new, larger facility will allow the gallery to display and store its increasing collections and meet modern seismic and environmental standards. This visionary support represents a valuable investment in British Columbia's rich visual culture. A new Vancouver Art Gallery will reach out to an even broader community, affecting more lives and connecting future generations to the visual arts, while providing an enduring legacy for the citizens of this province. A bold, dynamic new Vancouver Art Gallery will deliver superior artistic and cultural experiences to British Columbians and to visitors from around the world. This dynamic new gallery will further solidify Vancouver's position as the Pacific gateway to North America. The Vancouver East Cultural Centre, known locally as "the Cultch," will put \$9 million in provincial funding towards restoration and revitalization, and to establish an endowment to help with ongoing operating costs. This funding is in addition to \$90,000 provided by the Province in 2007 through the BC Arts Council. Revitalization projects underway include building a new three-storey addition to the current facility and restoring the 99-year-old historic building. The Cultch really is one of a kind, and this investment will ensure that it continues to thrive as a national treasure for years to come.

This week's bouquet of recognition goes to...

*Brian Le , Grade 12 student at Kelly Road
took third place in his category at the Taiwan
International Science Fair
Congratulations Brian!
We're proud of you!*

Community Announcements

*Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George
Annual Bowl for Kids Sake
Sunday March 9th, 2008*

*At Strike Zone 2366 Westwood Drive
Come out and support the Kids.*

Mark your calendar...

- ❖ Mar 7-9 - The Rainbow singers and musical friends present Musical Eastcoast Kitchen Party at ECRA, Admin: \$10
- ❖ Mar 8 – Cariboo Toastmasters celebrating their 50th Anniversary Call Laura -961-3477
- ❖ Mar 8 – 6PM – South American Night-costumes, dishes and slideshow at the Basement of Our Saviours Lutheran Church 3590 Dufferin Ave. for more info
- ❖ Mar 9 – Bowl for Kids - Big Brothers Big Sisters at Strike Zone 2366 Westwood Drive, for more info on how you can support, visit www.bbbspq.ca or call 563-7410
- ❖ Mar 9 – Cariboo Toastmasters 50th Anniversary Dinner/Dance –for more info call Laura : 961-3477
- ❖ Mar 11-10AM to 3PM Job Fair at CNC Atrium
- ❖ Mar 12 – 10AM to 3PM Job Fair at UNBC
- ❖ Mar 14 – Chamber Lunch at the Ramada Hotel
- ❖ Apr 1 –7PM Prince George Playhouse- the Mystique Variety Show to support the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada
- ❖ Apr 4- The Sting at the Coast Inn of the North. The Kiwanis Club and Child Development Centre have teamed up for this fun evening. For more details call CDC 563-7168

If you are a non profit organization and would like to advertise an upcoming event or share a story please email Shirley

Thank you for taking the time to read my newsletter. If you would like to see something specific in the next edition of Ask Your MLA, please [email me](mailto:Shirley). If you know someone who would like to receive our newsletter, email their name so we

can add them to our list.



My second e-newsletter, People, Places & Projects showcases great people and projects in our area. To subscribe to People, Places & Projects, [click here](#). To read past editions to go: [People, Places & Projects online](#).

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