

SEXSMITH STARS NEWS



7410 Columbia Street Vancouver, BC V5X 3C1	MR ROSS CASSIE PRINCIPAL	PHONE: 604-713-4901 FAX: 604-713-4903
Ms Magdalena Kassis Director of Instruction 604-713-5097	Ms Sandy Lowe Secretary	Mr. Gurmit Sangha PAC Chair

NEWSLETTER #10 **June 2017**

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

A Farewell Letter to the Sexsmith Community

As you know I will be retiring on July 31, so this is my last opportunity to say farewell and thank you to the Sexsmith Community.

I have been blessed to have been the Principal here at Sexsmith since September 2014. I can't believe how fast the three years have flown by here at Sexsmith but that is what happens when you are really enjoying yourself. Since the first time I visited Sexsmith I have been overwhelmed with how caring each of you has been to one another and to me especially! The only hesitation I had with my decision to retire was having to leave Sexsmith.

I have so many fond memories of Sexsmith and it is these memories that I think tell the story of how Sexsmith is such a special school. Here are just a few of those special times and groups I will always remember:

- The Diwali, Lunar New Year and Filipino celebrations. Watching the students perform, seeing the decorations and listening to the music during these celebrations is so entertaining and who can forget the luncheons;
- The Santa Pancake Breakfast sponsored by the PAC and the Rotary Club. This tradition at Sexsmith is such a special way to start the holiday season.
- Our monthly assemblies, especially seeing the students' reaction when they are acknowledged with a Sexsmith Stars Award and seeing our students serving as the host and or hostess of the assembly;
- Seeing our students perform at assemblies and in school plays. Better than going to see a play on Broadway or a concert at Rogers Arena!
- Seeing the children have so much fun at Sports Day and the Indoor Track Meet – especially during the cheers;
- Going into a classroom and watching learning in action or having young students come to my office and read to me or proudly show me some of their work;
- Having the opportunity to work with the PAC. It is amazing all of the support the PAC provides our school including all the special events, Hot Lunch program and the support given to our school program. A very special thank you to the PAC Executive members – Gurmit and Rana Sangha, Stan and Faye Tam, and Kami Hothi.
- All of the parents who volunteer in a variety of ways at our school. Without your demonstrated commitment we would not be able to provide a lot of the activities that we able to for our students;
- The Sexsmith Office staff – Mrs. Lowe and Ms. Ayres. The variety of tasks these individuals do on a daily basis are too many to properly list. However, suffice it to say that our school would not be able to operate as smoothly as it does without their efforts;
- Mr. Alan Toh and the school custodial staff. Our school is always clean and that is a result of Mr. Toh and his staff working hard to make sure we go to work and school in a clean environment. A good example of how respected

Mr. Toh is at our school is shown at our year end assembly when he receives a loud ovation from the students and staff when he is acknowledged.

- Our 3 Supervision aides who work hard to ensure our students' safety is properly addressed at recess and lunch;
- Our SSW team of 11 provides such genuine support for our students, staff and families. The children they work with have rewarding experiences at school in large part because of the work of these 11 individuals. The job of an SSW is a complex one and we are fortunate to have such a competent group of SSWs as part of the Sexsmith community.
- Our teaching staff is an incredibly talented group of professionals. They are all masters of their craft and are the most collegial group of teachers I have had the pleasure of working with in my 31 year career. It is their ability to collaborate with one another that is one of the reasons why our students are receiving a broad range of learning experiences that does enrich their lives as students.

As well as being very capable, the Sexsmith teachers are an incredibly caring group of individuals amongst themselves, to me and to the students. Great schools have to have great teachers and Sexsmith teachers are great!

- Finally to the Sexsmith students. I will miss all of you. Since the first day I arrived here you have been so kind to me. Your greetings and smiles mean so much to me. I wish all of you the very best and many thanks for helping to make my three years at Sexsmith so special.

Many people have asked what my plans are in retirement. I will be able to spend more time with my family especially with my 3 grandchildren who live in Victoria. I will be waiting for my wife to retire as a teacher in the next few years and then we intend to do all the travelling we haven't done yet. Of course I will be working on my golf game and keeping up our large garden at home. I am off to California twice this fall, France at spring break with my wife to see our youngest daughter, and to New York and Boston on a baseball trip in May to see some games and the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Again from the bottom of my heart thanks to all the Sexsmith community for the past three years!

Congratulations to Mrs Owen!

I am not the only one who is heading off into retirement. After over 40 years of dedicated service to Vancouver students, including the past 29 here at Sexsmith, Mrs. Owen has decided to join her husband, George, in retirement. Throughout all of her years, Mrs. Owen has not only worked hard with her classroom program but she has also coached hundreds of basketball, cross country, track and volleyball teams over her tenure. Just think how many students have benefitted from Mrs Owen's expertise and gracious giving of her time to do these extra-curricular activities.

In retirement I know that Mrs. Owen will remain busy – probably cycling and hiking in exotic places throughout the world and spending time with her husband and family.

Congratulations on a stellar career, many thanks for all that you did for your students, especially the ones you worked with at Sexsmith and best wishes for a healthy and productive retirement.

Off to Surrey We Go!

We also have 3 teachers leaving us in June.

Ms. Hummerston is leaving us to go and teach in Surrey. Ms. Hummerston has taught mostly primary classes since she came to Sexsmith in 2009. On behalf of the Sexsmith community I would like to wish Ms. Hummerston the very best in her future – Sexsmith's loss is Surrey's gain – and many thanks for all of your work here.

Ms. Leeper is also leaving Sexsmith for the Surrey School District. During her tenure here at Sexsmith, Ms. Leeper has been involved in a lot of staff and student leadership positions. She was instrumental in leading the staff in the implementation of the new Education Plan and was the sponsor of the Student Council. Best wishes in Surrey and thanks for your dedication to our community.

Ms. Nomura is taking a leave of absence for a year and then when she returns will be teaching at another Vancouver school. When I think of Ms. Nomura I always think about how much she loved to dress up in character when her class was working with Star Wars! Best wishes in your future and enjoy the year off, Ms. Nomura.

Ms. Kloss, a SSW who has been at Sexsmith, is also taking a leave next year. Ms. Kloss has done a remarkable job with the students she has worked with and we want to wish her the very best in the future.

New Staff Coming to Sexsmith

We are pleased to announce that besides Mr. Levine, who will be replacing me, we have recently hired three teachers who will be teaching in our intermediate grades beginning in September. Ms. Mai McHardy is coming to us from Norma Rose Point School but for many years she taught at Lloyd George Elementary so she knows the community. Ms. Sara Greig is also coming to Sexsmith from Norma Rose Point where she has been teaching Grade 5 over the past few years. Finally, Ms. Anna Morris is coming to us from Kerrisdale Elementary where she has taught Grade 4/5 this past year. We look forward to Ms. Greig, Ms. McHardy and Ms. Morris joining the Sexsmith community!

We still a few positions to fill over the summer – at least one primary position and a late primary/ early intermediate position. In all likelihood these positions will be filled in August.

PAC Carnival

Under cloudy skies our PAC hosted the annual Sexsmith Carnival. On that day our school community participated in lots of fun games and activities, ate cotton candy and sampled the best hot dogs in town. I know first-hand about the hot dogs (with onions) as I had a few myself. A highlight this year as in years past was the Dunk Tank. Many staff, including myself took a turn having freezing water dropped on them. Thanks to all the people who came out and supported the carnival and especially those parents who volunteered their time.

Grade 7 Farewell Celebration

On June 27, we held our annual Grade 7 Farewell Celebration to acknowledge our 44 Grade 7 students who are moving on to high school. It was a wonderful ceremony for a group of wonderful students and their families. On behalf of the Sexsmith community I want to wish all of the students the very best in the future, and to those parents who are moving on as well the very best and many thanks for the support you have provided our school over the years. Remember, once a Sexsmith Star, always a Sexsmith star!

District Track Meet

The month got off to a running start – literally – with our track team competing in the District Track Meet at Swangard Stadium. We had over 100 students from Grades 3 to 7 representing Sexsmith at this event which is about one half of the students in these grades. Our students performed very well with many of our students doing well in the individual events and our relay teams were a force to be reckoned with. Congratulations to all of our students for their great effort and dedication to our track team. Special thanks to our coaches – Mr. Kay, Mr. and Mrs. Owen, Mr. Biln and Ms. Chu for taking the time to coach the teams.

Year End Assembly

On the last day that school was in session for our students we held our year end assembly. It is a time for us to say goodbye to the students leaving us – especially the Grade 7s and to the staff who are leaving, as well as acknowledging some students with Sexsmith Stars Awards.

September Key Dates

Tuesday, September 5 - First Day of School – School is in session from 9:00 to 10:00 on that day for all returning students. Our new Kindergarten students are in session from 1:00 to 1:30 in the lunchroom.

Wednesday, September 6 – First full day of school for our Grade 1 to 7 students and also the first day for our new students. Kindergarten students are on a modified schedule until Tuesday, September 12.

Wednesday, September 13 – First full day of attendance for our new Kindergarten students

Thursday, September 14 – First PAC Meeting of the year

Monday, September 18 – Pro D Day – School is not in session for students

On behalf of the Sexsmith staff I want to wish all the students and families of the Sexsmith community a very safe and rewarding summer! To those students who are leaving Sexsmith we hope you will be taking fond memories of Sexsmith with you. To those students and families who are returning to Sexsmith we will see you on September 5th.