

Joe Nunn Scholarship

Feb. 6, 2024

Christine Gaudet, Scholarship committee

After I joined the scholarship committee this year, I realized that our application form looked very outdated, and in conversation with the rest of the executive, we agreed that the whole thing needed updating.

There was nothing in the file folder in the portable to help guide us with our work, so I reached out to the former president of 441 from the 1980s and early 1990s, Kathryn Farr. Her communication with me is below.

Here are some of the committee and the executive's decisions around our changes to the scholarship:

- “Scholarship” generally refers to money given to people based on high academic standing. We didn’t feel that reflects our requirement for this gift: “bursary” indicates money given for financial hardship or need. Again, that’s not how we make the decision to give the award—in the end, we have changed the name to Joe Nunn Award, to reflect that it is an award, and doesn’t have stringent criteria attached to it.
- We have included university programs in the eligibility because as time has gone on, there are now CUPE jobs in our local that require university education. We believe that the spirit of the gift is to boost unionised employment and therefore any education that a potential CUPE 441 employee might need should be included in the list of eligible programs.
- Finally, we have removed the requirement to have a counsellor sign the application, and it is no longer necessary to write a lengthy essay about future plans and past accomplishments. We are asking for a paragraph to outline future academic goals, and we think that is sufficient.
- We have given a cutoff date of April 30 to submit these applications.

From communication with Kathryn Farr (former CUPE 441 president) January 2024:

“The Joe Nunn Scholarship was developed long before my time. The Nunn family was one of the old Saanich Peninsula families and Joe Nunn was someone who was passionate about Saanich School District. He worked for Saanich as a custodian back in 1937! There will be a file in the CUPE office that will give you the history of who he was and why this was created. I can’t remember all the details – I’m so sorry. What I do recall, is that it was to be awarded to someone going to a Trades/college program/vocational/technical training (not a degree program at University) and that it was intended that priority be given to a son/daughter/foster child, etc. of a CUPE Local 441 member. I recall it couldn’t be used for students taking University transfer courses and the emphasis was on

vocational programs. But, you know who may remember more is Loree Wilcox – she used to be the Treasurer for the local and would have to organise for this scholarship so she may recall more about it. It happened before our time and we carried on with the legacy.” [NB: Loree has retired from CUPE and I couldn’t find a contact number for her.]

## **"Which North Saanich School do you mean?"**

**by Joan Butler Gilbert**

[Article on North Saanich Middle School’s website, Feb. 2024]

"After a trial of nearly 12 months, the school in this district (North Saanich School District) has to be discontinued on account of there being so few pupils in attendance."

*Taken from the third Annual report, 1873 by John Jessop.*

The history of the North Saanich School takes some research and this is by no means a complete story. So I will start out by inviting anyone who has further data to call me (652-9294) or submit the information to the next newsletter!

The North Saanich School District was established on August 30, 1872. The boundary between this and the District of South Saanich was described as: "the boundary line between such districts shall be the boundary of these districts as laid down in the official map" which doesn't tell us much unless we have the 'official map', however, it would seem that the boundary was an east-west line "from Bazan Bay to Saanich Arm".

In 1875 the school was open again with the teacher spending one-half of the time in the North Saanich School and the other half in the school being held in the Mechanic's Institute building (also referred to in other documents as the Literary Institute Building) which was on Wain Road. This meant that 24 children ("almost all of the children in the district") were receiving instruction. The School Trustees were S. Roberts, S. Sandover, with P. Imrie as Sec. Treas. and D. Stewart, Teacher. *Taken from the Annual report in 1875.*

The school referred to in these Annual reports was located on the site of the present Legion Hall on Mills Road. Richard John donated the land and in 1873 the school was built at a cost of \$500.00. (The good old days??) It was built of rough sawn lumber and whitewashed on the outside. The "desks" were actually hand-made benches and tables, and of course, there was the customary box-type heater in the centre of the room fed regularly with cordwood. There were no blackboards, no charts or maps and very few books. Nevertheless I'm sure it was an exciting day when the pupils of the area could begin their official schooling. Some of the names in the Register were Roberts, Armstrong, John, Reid, Wain, Horth, McTavish, McIlmoyl and Downey.

The one room elementary school was still there when the Nunn family came to North Saanich in 1913 and J.H. Nunn remembered, "The desks were double with two pupils side by side. The room was lighted by several oil lamps and heated by a wood burning stove which had seen better days. Sometimes, if one were clumsy, the back of the stove would come loose; or a leg or two would come off and the stove would come loose from the stovepipe. The room would fill with smoke and we would have to go outside. Strangely the stove never came apart when it was too cold to go outside!"

According to Mr. Nunn, the teacher was Miss Anne Buss who received the incredible salary of \$26.21 per month. The caretaker was paid \$7.50 per month. He also noted that the nearest High School was in Victoria and very few of the district's pupils were able to attend.

By 1918 a new location was needed and this was to be on ten acres of land on Center Road (later named Cresswell) near the site of the present Victoria International Airport Terminal Building. The new school was a two-room building and by 1925 also included the high school grades when another room was added.

Alas, this location was not to be the last. In February 1936, the main rooms of the school building were destroyed by fire. All that was left was the chimney and one room that was a separate building. Four days later saw classes held in the one remaining schoolroom, a service club hall (the Legion) on Mills Road and in a church hall on McTavish Road using tables and benches made by local carpenters.

On June 13, 1936, after a number of meetings and a plebiscite, what had been three small school districts (North Saanich, Deep Cove and Sidney) became the North Saanich Consolidated School District. The North Saanich Consolidated School District became part of Saanich School District No. 63 in 1946.

Plans were soon begun to build a new North Saanich School with five classrooms, an auditorium, home economics and industrial arts areas and a science room. Elementary classes would continue in their present venues (N.Saanich, Deep Cove and Sidney) but all junior and senior students would go to the new school to be built on the Center Road site. The school opened immediately after the Christmas break January 1937 with J.H. Nunn hired as caretaker at a salary of \$60.00 per month. Mr. Eric Forester was the Principal with a salary

of \$190.00 per month and teacher's salaries ranged from \$90.00 and up.

Meanwhile surveyors were staking out the runways for the new airport; the first grader began working in July 1937 and the first airplane landed on the new Patricia Bay Airport on August 15, 1939.

Due to the proximity of the airport, plans were made in case of the need for evacuation during air raids or emergency situations. The airport had become a training centre, (including the placement of bomb magazines) occupied by both the RCAF and the RAF.

On Tuesday, December 9, 1941 a message was received at the Nunn home (the nearest home to the school) that the school was to be closed immediately. This, of course, followed the bombing of Pearl Harbour two days before.

Once more North Saanich School was on the move! Two halls in Sidney were rented and equipment moved. Two rooms in Sidney Elementary were to be used as well by the Senior classes and another two rooms would be used by elementary classes in the morning and junior high in the afternoon. Any of us who have been in a similar situation or had children on the good old shift system can relate to the adjustment.

A new and permanent location was sought and the present site of what is now North Saanich Middle School was purchased. Building began in early 1942 and the new school (grade 7 - 12) was ready for September opening.

Meanwhile the Center Road building was used by the Armed Forces and later, temporarily by the students of Brentwood College after their school was destroyed by fire in 1947. Also, for a time, circa 1949 the building was used as an annex to the North Saanich school.

In 1956, building again took place. A gymnasium and new wing was added and growth and building continued for a number of years. Ed Breckinridge was the Principal from 1939 until 1964 when he moved to Claremont. Another name long associated with North Saanich was` Norm West, also Joe Lott who first taught at the Pat Bay Annex in 1950. Cam Inkster is another familiar name. Anyone reading this will have his or her own favourite (and possibly some not-so-favourite) teachers.

By 1965, a new Senior Secondary School was built at Claremont and North Saanich became a Junior Secondary School grades 7,8,9.

J.H. (Joe) Nunn, in ending his history from which much of this has been taken was proud of his association with North Saanich School and also with the fact that members of his family have always had a presence at the school from his brothers and sisters, their children and his grandchildren (1967). He died in 1982. .

Parkland Senior Secondary School opened in 1973 and Stelly's in 1977. During this time the School District moved to the Middle School system (grades 6,7,8) and North Saanich and Mt. Newton both became Middle Schools.

*Information from SPS Archives files*

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