

November 2010

***SuperBulletin ~ Lest we forget.***

*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row, □  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly □  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.  
John McCrae*



Dear Parents and Staff,

This is a time to honour, thank, remember and teach our youth about the achievements and sacrifices of our country's Veterans - of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Through their determination and selflessness, we live as a free, peaceful and democratic country. At this special time, we will see many Vancouver School District students engaged in assemblies and other events to show respect, gratitude and understanding for our courageous veterans and currently serving military personnel.

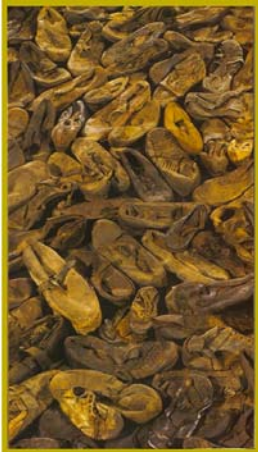
The date is also significant in that it marks the start of Veteran's week, a time to honour and remember those who have served their country in times of conflict, which continues to this day. The week begins on November 5<sup>th</sup> and ends with Remembrance Day, observed on November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11 am.

I cannot help but think what a great public education system we have here in Vancouver and across Canada. We are so very fortunate to enjoy what we have and so must remember what it took to ensure this. I recall hearing one of our great Canadians, Stephen Lewis, speak at a local conference a few years ago. He talked about world conflict and the enduring constant that education provides for every sector of this planet. No matter where one looks in the world, in spite of our troubled times and, in regions where horrendous conditions prevail, education remains the paramount priority for all people. Children in the most challenging places on this Earth, when asked what they most desire, answer in chorus, "to attend school." It is for this reason that we must not forget the sacrifices of those who stood up to defend our freedoms. It is for our children past, present and future.

A few years ago, my family chose to take a very different holiday. It was not to the surf and sand of the warmer climes. It was not to the lakes and

**A Day of  
Remembrance**

forests of the Northern escapes. We chose to have, what my son calls, a "Learning holiday." My family went to Washington, DC. Our visit took us to more museums than Vancouver has Starbucks. We joined the queues to see the most obscure of crimes at the Crime museum. We saw the Magna Carta, the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence; we saw Rembrandts and Monets, Apollo lunar landers and Spitfires, the "Hope" diamond and a woolly mammoth of bygone times.



Perhaps the most poignant moment though (apart from the *Marine One* helicopter flying overhead and landing before us on the White House lawn) were the visits to the Holocaust Museum and Arlington Cemetery. The first reminded us of a time in history that we cannot ever forget. The most impactful memory of this visit was the great mound of shoes strewn in a chaotic pattern of drab colours, shapes and sizes - each piece of leather holding a story of its owner - long gone, but never forgotten.

From there, to Arlington, a site reminiscent of the Bény-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery in France, where, among acres of green foliage, lies a record planted in neat, picturesque patterns of perfectly aligned stones, each representative of and chronicling what this week comes to mean. As we walked silently among those small, white steles, and witnessed the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the long history of world torment, valour and contribution was present all around us. Here also we saw the final resting place of great leaders who still serve as symbols of freedom, hope, justice and change.

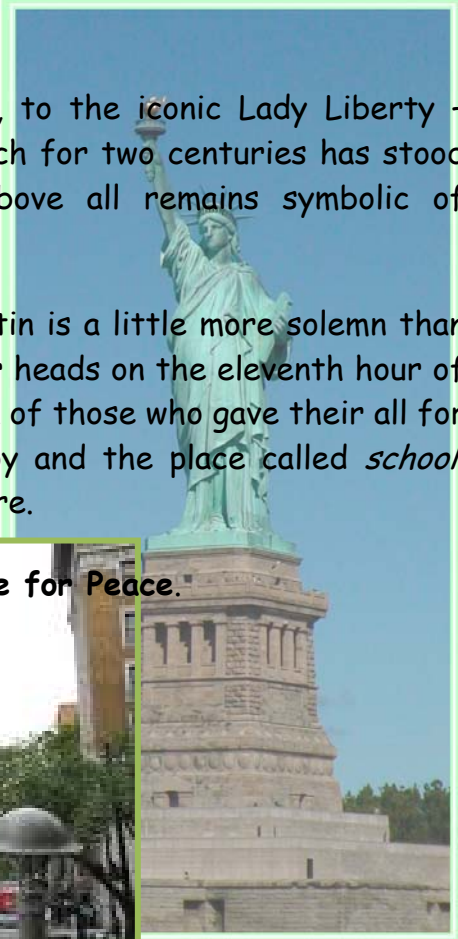




Our final destination for our summer adventure was New York, New York - the lights, sounds and smells of the yellow cabs, people and hotdogs finely balanced with the somber solitudes we observed when visiting *Ground Zero*. A site so large that we could feel and hear the skyscraper winds howling down Wall Street,

like banshees, as harbingers of an economy lost, rolling over this newly created terrain, shadowed by the hulking towers of the financial districts and still carrying the memories of those who we must never forget. For the souls of the twin towers, who perished in a different kind of turmoil, we must also remember.

Our last stop of the journey was ironically, to the iconic Lady Liberty - *Enlightening the World* - a proud figure, which for two centuries has stood tall and reached out to humanity. She above all remains symbolic of democracy, peace, freedom... and hope.



And so, my friends and colleagues, this bulletin is a little more solemn than most. When the bugle sounds and we bow our heads on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, think of those who gave their all for us and paved the way for the lives we enjoy and the place called *school*, which represents hope for our collective future.

**November is a time to remember and a time for Peace.**

**Lest we forget.**

*Steve*

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Superintendent of Schools

