

A Teacher Profile of Suzanne Burbidge

By Gerry Brach, Brooks Secondary School Counsellor



Two of Suzanne's interests are her love of dogs and travelling. As far as the travelling is concerned, Suzanne has enjoyed trips to Greece, Italy, Spain, and Turkey. "Turkey was so amazing as it is secular, and so ancient. I had a wonderful opportunity to see one of the major libraries of the ancient world when I was in Turkey." Suzanne spent one year living in Japan and has made four trips to France. "I love the language and culture in France. A friend and I celebrated our 50th birthdays by taking a cooking course, and going on a tour, in Southern France." Suzanne currently owns a Spanish hound (Ibizan) named "Rojo" that she rescued from Spain twelve years ago. "He is an incredible dog, also an expensive dog, as he survived an encounter with wolves and a steep fall from the Lois Dam."

Suzanne started her teaching career 31 years ago in Elkford, B.C., teaching English. She later taught

in Fernie for seven years, before returning home to the West Coast when she was offered a job at Brooks in 1999. "My first year teaching at Brooks was the most difficult of my career as I taught *all* the Grade 12 English courses." One of her favourite courses to teach eventually became Law 12. "Laws are supposed to be flexible to reflect society and community needs and I have been constantly updating my material to demonstrate that principal of our justice system."

Over the course of her career Suzanne has taught every Humanities course except history. That being the case, there are innumerable classroom experiences she considers to be highlights in her career, but she was adamant that I include these three very positive experiences from this last month. "I have enjoyed each successive Law class and their Mock Trials, but this one stands out; they have always managed to pull them off with wit and charm and a great amount of teenage insouciance, despite my mounting hysteria during the countdown, but this class did a really great job of presenting the trial I wrote myself. I was also grateful for Natasha Bakker's support this year tweaking assignments to fit into the inquiry model. I also felt validated, and I was pretty thrilled, when Michelle Doyle used my information literacy unit to extend her socials 10 inquiry projects."

Suzanne loved English and did a four year undergraduate degree in English, from Simon Fraser University. She later completed her Professional Development Program from S.F.U. "I love the fact that novels reflect both history and the English language. I loved studying a genre called "The Female Gothic" when I went to university and now my favorite reads are British murder mysteries."

Suzanne hasn't quite figured out what retirement is going to be like yet, which is something that I can relate to! She likes to research everything that affects her, so when she started researching how to have a successful retirement she got stuck on the meaning and purpose part. "I became so worried about having a sense of purpose in retirement and perseverated so much, it ended up being work, so I'm taking the summer off." She does know that when she retires at the end of June, she is thinking about a visit to Canada's arctic and perhaps for getting more involved with different environmental causes. We look forward to seeing her retirement unfold as she moves into this new and interesting phase of her life. All the best Suzanne!