

# We need a 'can do' attitude



When I close my eyes I can remember the tidal bore when it was something to behold. It was a real miracle of nature. Then along came the causeway. I hope my children will one day see the tidal bore as I once did.

The causeway has wreaked destruction on more than the tidal bore. It has silted in the river. It has deprived us of the sight of small vessels floating lazily up and down it and docking along the shore. Also, let us not forget about the fish. They were destroyed too. Some say you cannot turn the clock back. If we took that attitude for the last 40 years there would be no Université de Moncton, no Official Languages Act and no equal opportunities. In 1960, the infrastructure and bureaucracy was in place to maintain the status quo. It cost money and energy to turn the clock back way back to the era of our settlers, to a time of equality between English and French.

If we didn't turn back the clock when required we wouldn't have a Saint John Harbour clean up. This is something the federal Conservatives have joined Premier Shawn Graham on. This a great partnership between the two levels of government, but why not a partnership to fix the Petitcodiac River? The federal seat of Saint John is held by Paul Zed, a Liberal Member of Parliament, just as Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe is represented by his Liberal Party colleague Brian Murphy. Obviously there was a need to clean up the Saint John Harbour. That need is there for the Petitcodiac River too!

We can restore the river. It would be an economic boon to the region. A revitalized river and a new bridge would be of great benefit to Metro Moncton. Moreover, the investment to restore the Petitcodiac would mean our children would not have to do so in the future, at an even greater cost.

So, to Member of Parliament Rob Moore, columnist Marie Claude Blais and all the other naysayers, they should know that their attitude has never prevailed in New Brunswick. Their attitudes have historically been rejected time and again by the people of this province. We are again, a "can do" province.

It is just a pity the Lord government did not accept the 50 per cent funding offered by the Martin government.

■ **Mike Murphy is the Provincial Health Minister and MLA for Moncton-North. His column appears bi-weekly in Moncton This Week. If you would like to reach him, stop by his office on Mountain Road or phone 869-6115.**

# Superintendent is ready for another great school year

**Karen Branscombe says there are a lot of exciting projects in the works for 2007-2008**

**BY STACEY MERRIGAN**  
THIS WEEK STAFF

With just a few days left before students in School District 2 return to the classroom, superintendent Karen Branscombe feels that once again, they will be going back to a high quality education system.

"In our district in the last five years, we've hired about 500 new teachers," she says. "There are two sides to it.

"We're losing some experienced teachers, but we're also gaining young, energetic teachers with lots of ideas. We get to train them to what we need."

Karen has spent her entire 27-year career in School District 2, coming here fresh out of university herself to teach at Riverview Junior High.

"She's since taught at Harrison Trimble, been a vice principal for both Sunny Brae and Queen Elizabeth schools, and a principal at Lewisville Middle School.

Initially taking on the role of communications director when she first came to work at the board office, Karen has been the superintendent for four and a half years now. She has a very clear vision of her role in the district.

"My role is primarily that of lead teacher," she says.

"I like to focus on the classroom. I'm

the person who has to keep things at the forefront that will improve teaching. I need to make sure we hire good principals and good teachers.

"The other part of my job is being responsible for the \$100 million budget and all 38 of our facilities," she continues.

"So I deal with staffing and human resources issues, and make sure to stay on top of new trends. I'm the keeper of the big picture."

Juggling educational theory and financial concerns takes up most of Karen's workday, but she cherishes the opportunities she gets to interact with students when she visits schools.

"The best part of the job is the people part," she says.

"The staff here are dynamic.

"They accomplish a lot. It's still a pleasure to go into schools and talk to children and remember that's what it's all about."

As a district, Karen has some specific goals to work on for the upcoming year. After some less than impressive results from literacy and math testing in the last few years, parents will continue to see a focus on those two areas.

"We're focusing on instruction and improving the literacy and math scores," she says.

"Part of it is having really good teachers with strong practices, but they also have to have the tools they need to teach. The government has also given us more support for literacy and math, so we're anxious to see that success."

Other projects coming up in the next year

are also exciting. Karen says that there will be plenty of opportunities for out students to experience more than just a basic education.

"We're starting some projects with technology and with other countries," she says. "We're also looking at activities to encourage physical activity. We're trying to focus on health."

And for all of the parents out there anticipating the coming school year, Karen stresses two things: street safety, both on the bus and on the sidewalk, and keeping lines of communication open between parents and schools.

"Parents need to feel comfortable coming into the school and talking to teachers and principals," she stresses.

"The big things are being involved, staying on top of things, asking your kids what happened at school, and seeking answers when you need them."

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Karen Branscombe is Superintendent for School District 2.

STACEY MERRIGAN/THIS WEEK