

## ***The STUDY CANADA Summer Institute: 25 Years of Teaching Canada***

By Tina Storer, K-12 Outreach Coordinator, WWU  
with Micah Rankin, ICCS Intern, WWU

Each year during the last week of June, social studies teachers and supervisors from across the US travel to Bellingham, WA, to attend the *STUDY CANADA Summer Institute for K-12 Educators* offered by the Center for Canadian-American Studies at Western Washington University. It is a small but vital migration that has fostered teaching Canada in US schools for the past twenty-five years and, in 2003, the program celebrated its silver anniversary with teachers from Washington, Colorado, Texas, North Carolina and Arizona.

Situated 20 miles south of the British Columbia border, the program allows teachers unique opportunities to visit and learn more about our neighbor to the north. Indeed, although registration is limited to 20 participants, teachers from every state of the union have attended *STUDY CANADA*. Teachers continue to give such positive word-of-mouth about the program that their support is the primary source for registrant applications. After our 2002 session, Lisa Iverson, an Oregon teacher, wrote the Center to say, "I have attended many great workshops but the Study Canada Summer Institute was excellent. Each session was an engaging mosaic of Canada, applicable for immediate classroom use."

Such high praise is largely due to the continued involvement of the original program directors, Drs. Bob Monahan, Don Alper and Don Wilson. In 1976, when first given funding by the Canadian government, little did they suspect that *STUDY CANADA* would be so well received for so many years. Dr. Monahan, founder of the Center for Canadian-American Studies but retired since 1992, recalls that "literally thousands of students know something about Canada as a result of *STUDY CANADA*." Dr. Alper, the current director, adds that "*STUDY CANADA* motivates and often inspires educators to teach more about Canada and they return to their schools sharing enthusiasm for Canada with their students and colleagues." Dr. Wilson, UBC Faculty of Education, also attends the workshop to advance Canada in the US curriculum. In 2000, the directors hired Tina Storer, a Canadian teacher, to join the team as the Center's K-12 Outreach Coordinator. Their dedication and commitment to educating teachers about Canada is remarkable and their enthusiasm rubs off on the teachers they meet.

Although 2003 *STUDY CANADA*'s position as a premier program for teaching Canada is secure, the organizers continue to strive towards improvements. In 2004, the course credits and clock hours increased their value and a tiered fee structure was instituted that reduces costs for early registrants, pre-service and new teachers. The curriculum project that participants develop during the course of the workshop has been redefined to expand teachers' personal teaching portfolios and be shared online with other teachers through the <http://k12studycanada.wvu.edu> website, a primary source for teachers and students seeking Internet information on Canada. Rest assured, however, that the workshop's high caliber and ability to effectively train educators to teach Canada remains constant year after year.

**The Center for Canadian-American Studies at WWU, along with the University of Washington's Canadian Studies Center, forms a U.S. Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center for Canada and *K-12 STUDY CANADA* represents joint outreach efforts.**