



Up the Creek!

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Message From the (Outgoing) President - Scott Lewis

It is with mixed emotion that I take this opportunity to inform you that I am stepping down as President of Wolf Creek Local #3, effective November 1, 2009. On the one hand I am excited about my new job and new family (both of which necessitate my needing to redistribute my energy away from the local); on the other hand I am sad to leave my position in the local. Sad because it has been a wonderful four years spent in the service of the best teachers in the province. I don't make that claim lightly. Wolf Creek teachers are some of the hardest working, most professional, most competent, most caring teachers I know. And I know plenty of teachers – serving as your president has given me the chance to meet and talk to hundreds of teachers from all around our province (including a few from around the world) and Wolf Creek teachers stand out in every way. My time as local president has made me a better teacher because I have been inspired by your example. As I leave I want to be sure to mention a few really important things. First, I am genuinely grateful for the chance to have worked with and for our current school board. Paula

Lamoureux, Donna Peterson, Trudy Bratland, Karin Engen, Bob Huff and Lorrie Jess have been excellent trustees who are focused on making a difference for our students. Our trustees have shown in their words and actions that student centered public education is their first and last concern. Most recently our trustees spent their reserve funds in response to a million dollar claw back announced by our provincial government. They could have cut programs or staff but they took the rather bold move of spending their emergency funds. Granted, when the provincial government arbitrarily takes back one million dollars, one does have an emergency on one's hands. But our school board did the right thing for our students. Again. Second, I want to thank the central office staff I have worked with and for: Larry Jacobs, Del Litke, Kurt Sacher, Wanda Christensen, Joe Henderson and Roger Hall have all acted in classy, caring and genuine ways to support and lead the teachers of Wolf Creek. In short, things are better here in Wolf Creek. Much better. Trustees, central office staff and teachers are working collaboratively and it is because the people mentioned above are the real deal (i.e. they really do want to work

with teachers, they really are caring professionals, they really do respect teachers, they really do want to work with us for kids). Third, you are in excellent hands. Your new president is Michael Doll. I will let Mike introduce himself in this space next month. In comparison to me, Mike is smarter, thinner and younger. I have no hesitation in recommending him and I fully support his leadership. For the remainder of this year, Mike and I will switch seats, he will take over as president and I will fill in as his vice president. In May our usual elections will occur and you will have a chance to elect Mike as your new president (if he runs as I hope he does). Of course our local is a democracy and you will exercise your franchise in the spring. There is much to do over the next year or two. Our provincial government promised us a 5.9% raise this year but only paid 4.8%. That issue is currently before the courts. Our provincial government is signalling that it intends to cut public education by as much as \$400 million next year. Our provincial government is currently opening up the School Act with the intention of making significant changes. You don't need me to tell you that we seem to be on yet another collision course with the provincial P.C.'s. All I can tell you is don't take it personally. I know, I know it is really hard not to take it personally. But we are civil servants and that makes us an easy target for our political masters. That is all. It is not that they don't like us, it is just that we are a big easy target. Barnett House has started a \$500,000 media campaign that you can see at <http://www.stopthecuts.ca/>. You may have already seen the TV commercials where teachers are erased. We'll see what happens over the next 6 to 8 months. In the mean time it has been my pleasure to serve as your president. I have appreciated your support. My best to you and yours!

Fine Dining at Ponoka Outreach

Ponoka Outreach School held a Pancake Breakfast on October 29. This is an annual event for them, in which they turn the school into a first class restaurant. On the menu were pancakes, sausages, eggs and hash browns, all for the low, low price of just \$5. The number of guests was down a bit this year, but the students did an outstanding job of greeting and seating them and then serving in a most professional manner. Parents were also on hand to help out in the kitchen. In conjunction with the event were door prizes which raised money for the Ponoka Outreach awards and scholarship fund.

-Photos and article submitted by Sheila Cooke



West Country Outreach Gives Back

On October 30, the students at West Country Outreach School held a barbeque fundraiser for Deni Lund, a recent graduate of the school who was diagnosed with leukemia. The Rimbey Co-op generously donated space and a discount on the cost of the food. Donations from the staff covered the cost of the food, so all the money collected was given directly to Deni and her family.

Thanks to the hard work of our students and support staff, and the generosity of Rimbey's community, we raised \$1442 to help Deni's family to pay for living and medical expenses.

West Country's students were also busy in the first week of November, collecting supplies and donations to fill 38 shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child.

-Article submitted by Kimberly Gillard



Up the Creek! is published monthly, nine times a year. Your contributions and feedback are always welcome.

Website: weteachers.ab.ca

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