

PHOTO FEATURE

Parrsboro Lions Club

Parrsboro Lions Club welcomed 4 new inductees Sept. 19th to the club bringing the membership total to new highs. The District Governor Scott MacKenzie joined us for the evening as well as members from several other Lions Clubs. The new Lions are a welcome addition to help in the many community project goals of the club.

(Lawrence R. Nicoll Photos)



Pictured above are New Lions and some of their sponsors. (L-R): New Lion Audriana Smith, sponsor Jerry Boutlier, new Lions Phyllis Wheaton, Jessica Wheaton, John Langille and sponsor Sharlene Lake.



New Lion Audriana Smith adds to the light of the Lions Club.



District Governor and the new Lions. (L-R): Audriana Smith, Phyllis Wheaton, District Governor Scott MacKanzie, Jessica Wheaton and John Langille.

Wentworth School Sustainability Association Formed

By Hope Bridgewater

Last spring, the NDP Minister of Education, Ramona Jennex, to her credit, listened to the outcry from Nova Scotia communities when several of the eight Nova Scotia School Boards by March 31, 2013 declared many schools would be slated for closure, especially small rural elementary schools. There was so much anger and controversy over the School Boards decisions on school closures that Ramona Jennex in April requested that a moratorium on school closures be declared until time was spent reviewing and improving the review process regarding school closures and only then implementing it.

Many School Boards listened to this request, but, unfortunately for the Wentworth Consolidated Elementary, the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board refused to honour the Education Minister's request and has declared that Wentworth Consolidated Elementary is to close on June 30, 2015, unless it can find other funding options if it is to stay open.

Wentworth Elementary needs to be declared an isolated school as soon as possible and be able to remain on its present site. The Minister of Education has recently announced establishing Early Years Centres for ages 2 up to age 6 with universal quality education. If Wentworth Elementary is closed in 2015, students as young as 4 years up to 11 years will have to travel by bus to distant schools for over 2 hours each day, and this is a human rights issue. To add to this human rights issue concerning bussing, there is the further issue of financing superior education for some young students at Early Learning Centre while allowing rural students from 4 years to 11 years to

suffer fatigue mentally and physically on long school bus rides. Remaining at the successful Wentworth Elementary site would give elementary age students a better education. There has to be fairness to rural elementary students when considering Early Years Centres.

To move Wentworth Elementary from its present location is also prejudicial to rural life by degrading the Wentworth area economically, socially and culturally by discouraging new families with elementary school age children to move here if there is no elementary school located in the Wentworth area, and contradicts the rural focus of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building a Rural Economy established in November, 2012, and now at work as a task force.

The Minister of Education has stated that she can request but not order the moratorium to the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board as the Education Act gives the final decision to the School Boards regarding its cuts to its budget. In that case, the Education Act needs to be changed so that a rural community, for instance, can appeal a Board's unfair decision to the Premier and Minister of Education. The Premier and the Education Minister in a democracy should have more electoral power than School Boards. Wentworth Elementary is a successful school and does not deserve unjust treatment by its Board. In many ways, Wentworth Elementary can be proven to be successful and, as space does not permit all the reasons, one incident symbolizes success when a community volunteer helping to plant a vegetable garden on the school grounds and working with a young student hears him say to her, "This is the best day of my life."

Instead of bowing heads meekly and submitting to the School Boards order without acting, Wentworth residents formed the Wentworth School Sustainability Association and



Maddison Bushen, age 8, performs Scottish Highland step-dancing (Highland Fling, Seann Triubhas, Sword Dance) at a Wentworth Concert held in order to raise funds to keep the Wentworth Elementary School open beyond 2015. Maddison is a student at the Wentworth Elementary School. (Hope Bridgewater Photo)

partnered with the Wentworth Community School Association to raise funds and pursue other arrangements to keep Wentworth Elementary open. The CCRSB can say that we are simply obeying their order, but that does not tell the real story. In reality, the Wentworth residents are working very hard at keeping Wentworth Elementary open, despite already paying their share of taxes for public education, and at the same time letting the media and politicians know about the injustice being committed by the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board.

At a public meeting called by the Wentworth School Sustainability Association, all the speakers spoke of the necessity of keeping Wentworth Elementary located at its present spot and strategies for doing so, including declaring it an isolated school. Many speeches indicated disappointment with the actions of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board.

The Wentworth Community School Sustainability Association and the Wentworth Community School partnered to organize

Family Fun Day for fund raising to keep Wentworth Elementary on its present site. Fun Day was located at Wentworth Elementary and at the Wentworth Recreation Centre with a daytime program from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. consisting of Zumba, RCMP Bike Rodeo, a Softball Tournament, a Home-Run Derby, "Various Kids' Games", Dunk Tank, Pony Rides, Face Painting, Washer Toss Tournament, and NDP candidate Larry Duchesne participated with others in the Dunk Tank game.

At nighttime from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. a variety Concert featured step dancing, music, and raffles for prizes. Talented performers were the following: Charley Patriquin, Master of Ceremony; Maddison Bushen (step dancer); Singers: David Patriquin, Sharon Miller, Gordon Moore, Jocelyn Morris, Ashley Baker, Charles Patriquin, Andrew Kelty, Faye Henderson, Aubrey Giffin, Dawn Moore, Larry Patriquin, David Moore; Band: Jean Mooring-Baker (piano), Charley Patriquin (fiddle), Steve Ferdinand (drums), Ronnie Rushton (bass guitar), David Moore (lead guitar), Ashley Baker (rhythm guitar).

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