

Elementary school protest has Redcliff mom wanting answers

By KAREN KARBASHEWSKI
The Medicine Hat News

Tuesday's protests by students in Prairie Rose school division, which included Grade 4 to 6 students from Margaret Wooding School in Redcliff, has one mom hopping mad.

"I had a kid coming home from after an hour on the bus and he was absolutely soaked to the knees and so excited and so wound up about this. To try and deal with it was an impossibility. You show me a Grade 4 that knows what's happening. They have a sense of justice but they believe everything an adult who they assume is in a position of authority says. It's very upsetting," said Rosemary Page.

Page's son Ryan is a Grade 4 student at the school and one of about 40 students who protested Bill 12 which sets the rules for arbitration in the dispute between teachers and school boards, including removing the teachers' right to strike. Some teachers in the district have pulled their voluntary services like band, yearbook and graduation ceremonies and numerous students within the region skipped classes to protest.

Margaret Wooding principal Wally Bergstresar confirmed the students were

outside demonstrating and he and his staff had discussed with the students that they should be in class.

"I talked with almost all of the kids and we tried to explain the issues to them and asked if they had talked about it with their mom and dad. Their question was 'can I go out?' and my response was 'I don't want you to go out, I want you to stay in class, that's the place for you to be,'" said Bergstresar.

"I sent a memo home to all parents explaining that staff had talked to the students beforehand and that the students are expected to make up anything that was missed and they shouldn't expect any further instruction — it was a choice that they made and if there was a point to be made by them then I think they've made it. I've asked them if they want to further protest or further draw attention to their concerns there are constructive ways to do that rather than disrupt the learning and teaching that teachers are still trying to provide them," he said.

Page said the school should not have allowed the students to walk out, especially without clearing it with the parents first. She has called MLA Lorne Taylor, Dr. Lyle Oberg,

the minister of learning, and the Prairie Rose school board looking for answers.

As of late Thursday, she had received none. She wants to discuss why schools are allowing children as young as 10 years old to leave classes to demonstrate.

"They are using young children without the people who are responsible for them — possibly against their wishes or their ideas on it. We have been very, very careful to be diplomatic when the news is on about the strike. And to go and have this happen at school, without our knowledge is really disturbing. He (Ryan) respects authority and all they had to do was tell him no, don't do it and he wouldn't have done it," she said.

Bergstresar said the school encouraged students to stay in class and discuss the matter.

"We encouraged them to stay and to try and find where the middle ground is and what the issue is on all sides — there may be five or six different versions of the truth here and we encouraged them to talk to everybody," he said.

Prairie Rose school division superintendent Keith Jones didn't return calls from the News on Thursday to discuss the issue.

CLUBS CALENDAR

Monday, April 1

- Gamblers Anonymous, 7:30 p.m., Provincial building, 3 Ave. entrance. 527-7673.
- Overeaters Anonymous, 7:30 p.m., Victory Lutheran Church. 528-2514, 526-9162.
- Walking Grief Group, 2 p.m., Medicine Hat Mall. Info: 529-8020.
- TOPS, 6:15 p.m., Lawn Bowling clubhouse.
- Alpha Course (exploration into the meaning of life), 6:15 p.m., Fifth Avenue Memorial United Church, info: 526-2237.
- Live music jam for young and older musicians, 8 p.m., Moose Family Centre.
- Parents of Autistics/Asperger's Syndrome support group, 7:30 p.m., Herald staff room, info: 548-6167.
- Chinook Village annual spring craft and bake sale fund-raiser, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., tables for rent \$15, Chinook Village, info: 526-6951.

Tuesday, April 2

- Circle T Toastmasters, 6:30 p.m., library.
- FAM Quilters, 7 p.m., Fifth Ave. Memorial United Church, info: 526-2237.
- Medicine Hat Bridge Club, 7 p.m., Viener Centre, info: 529-0042.
- Medicine Hat Concert Band rehearses 7:30 p.m., CHHS Band Room. Info: 527-0778.
- Hepatitis C Support Group, 7 p.m., 550 Allowance Ave. Info: 527-7099.
- Golden K Kiwanis Club, 9:15 a.m., Viener Centre, info: 527-3112.

Wed., April 3

- Co-Dependents Anonymous, 7:30 p.m., Crestwood Mennonite Church upstairs.
- Cactus Rose Quilters' Guild, 7 p.m., Kinplex meeting room. Info: 548-6947.
- Chess Club, 7 p.m., Southview School. Info: 526-5484.
- Mood Disorders Association, 7 p.m., room 111, Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, info: 580-4224.
- Gambler Anonymous for the 50 Plus, 2 p.m., Victory Lutheran Church, info: 526-7792.

Thursday, April 4

- Bible Study coffee break, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Christian Reformed Church. Story hour for ages 3 to 5. Info: 529-0121.
- Gamblers Anonymous, 7:30 p.m., Provincial building, 3 Ave., entrance. 526-7792.
- Emotions Anonymous, 7:30 p.m., Victory Lutheran Church, info: 527-4112 or 527-4302.
- Medicine Hat Bridge Club, 7 p.m., Viener Centre, info: 529-0042.
- 50 Plus Club . . . bingo, whist, dancing and live music, 7 p.m., Viener Centre, info: 527-4112.
- Crib players wanted, 7:25 p.m., Legion #17.

Friday, April 5

- Drop-in Grief Group, 10:30 a.m., Room 4, PHP hospital.
- Solid Rock Cafe for 13-19 years, 8 p.m. to midnight, 164 Stratton Way, S.E.

Saturday, April 6

- Jr. (under 18) Chess Club, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Southview Community School, info: 526-5484.

Sunday, April 7

- Opera: Carol Whaley, soprano, with Darrel Maier, piano, Unity Lutheran Church, 7:30 p.m., info: 526-4041.
- Christian Science meetings, 10:30 a.m. 526-2060 or 527-2092 for location.
- Cribbage Group, 2 p.m., Eagles Club.
- Medicine Hat Bridge Club, 1 p.m., Viener Centre, info: 529-0042.
- Mood Disorders Association, 7 p.m., room 111, Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, info: 580-4224.

Students join former Stampede queen's cancer battle

By LISSA SWIHART
Medicine Hat News

Students from George Davison school emptied their piggy banks to help a former Hat rodeo queen pay for alternative cancer treatments.

Wendi Lund, 29, a Duchess native, was diagnosed with cancer in July of 2001 and became terminal in December of 2001.

"When I told Wendi about your school raising money for her cancer treatments she started to cry," Nichole Neubauer of Medicine Hat told the students of George Davison school Thursday.

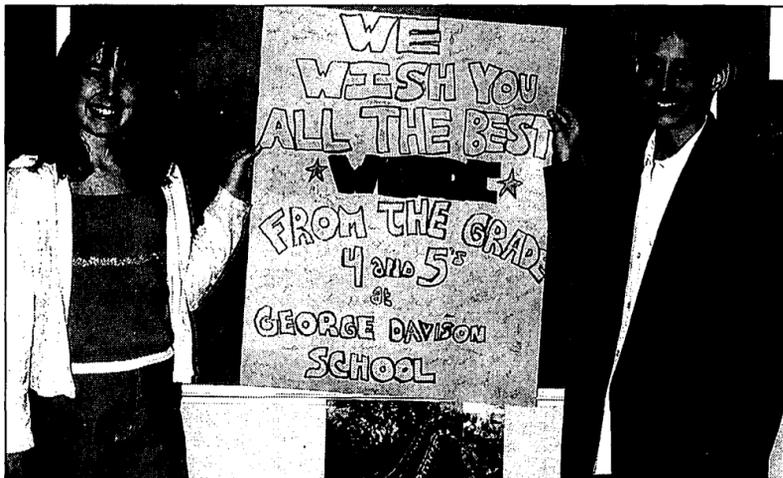
She said Lund has been her best friend since the two met in 1992 when Neubauer was the Medicine Hat Rodeo princess and Lund was the queen.

"We went to the mini-rodeo at the Arena (during the Roughstock Xtreme rodeo) and we heard Wendi was sick," said Allison Knodel, 11, a Grade 5 student. "We thought we could give her a hand."

Neubauer organized a fund-raiser at the rodeo March 16 where she displayed pictures of Lund and asked for donations to help pay for expensive treatments she seeks in Mexico.

Lund was also Miss Rodeo Canada in 1994. Knodel said Lund is part of this community so it's important to make sure she has all the help she can get.

"It's not too much money, but it seemed to really add up once we all started bringing



— NEWS PHOTO RYAN TAPLIN

Grade 5 students Allison Knodel and Scott Wendell from George Davison School hold up a sign for Hatter and 1994 Miss Rodeo Canada Wendi Lund Thursday afternoon. Students in grades four and five raised \$262 of their own money to donate to Lund who is undergoing cancer treatment in Mexico.

our money in."

Joan Sadownik, a Grade 4 teacher at the school, said it was her students' idea to raise money for Lund over a week-long period.

"They mentioned that Wendi was in the paper and they decided to raise money for her cancer treatments," said Sadownik. "So we read the article and we all decided to do this with the Grade 5 students."

Scott Wendell, 11, a Grade 5 student, said all of the students were more than willing to donate their money.

"We just asked that everyone go home and

take money from their piggy banks."

Jill Robin, a Grade 5 teacher, said the compassion displayed by the students doesn't surprise her at all.

"This was all the kids. They are so generous and they take care of each other and care about each other. It's wonderful to see."

Neubauer was presented with the check for \$262 during a school assembly Thursday afternoon.

"If anybody ever tells you guys you can't do something because you're kids, tell them you helped save someone's life," she told the kids.

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Thursday's cryptokuip: DURING A GAME, DON'T SIT IN THE BLEACHERS, OTHERWISE YOUR CLOTHES MAY BECOME WHITE.
Today's Cryptokuip Clue: S equals T

A X Y D L B A A X R
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