

ALL SCHOOL REUNION OF THE WILDCATS, LOGGERS AND CHARGERS

WHAT A GREAT WEEKEND!

I wanted to take a minute to thank everyone for coming home and enjoying the reunion. I also want to thank the folks that helped everything go smoothly with setting up and taking down. Dixie Severson for all the behind the scenes updates and mailings and Stan Erickson for the weekend work on the front lines.

- I was happy to have been able to meet so many of you and share the great stories!
- After paying all expenses for the tent, the tables, the meal, the postage, the printing, the rent, and other misc, we put nearly \$3,500 into the education foundation! Our foundation board will meet early in the fall and discuss the projects that we will be focusing on.
- What I learned:
 - Alumni are great people! They love their past and are proud of their schools!
 - I will make better use of our great community centers in both towns. I will not order tents and tables and in return we can lower the meal prices.
 - The history centers were a big hit, especially in WG. Next time I'll have Westbrook's registration and pictures in the auditorium so that it's part of the Wildcat / Charger history center which is in the old building.
 - We will not have mailings any more but instead rely completely on the website and emails to keep folks in tune with what's happening at the school. This time we used a bulk stamp which saved nearly \$2500 in postage. The down side is that addresses did not forward. Moving to email and the website will keep costs down and will give a uniform message to what / where / when events are happening.
 - I will be visiting with some alumni regarding keeping it all on the same weekend or having a Logger reunion one weekend that is a natural fit such as pageant or the annual Wg June golf tourney and having the Wildcat / Charger reunion always on Westbrook Fun Days.
 - I will be visiting with some alumni regarding having an all school reunion every 5 years vs. the 10. I feel that as long as we take away the labor intensive things such as mailings and table / tents we can focus on the activities that bring people together and allow for visiting.
 - The pictures went well and I appreciated how everyone pulled together to make it work. I don't often see the gyms "buzzing" like that. I will have less handouts, more volunteers at the tables and more nametags.

- The Saturday evening meal and entertainment was hurt because of the storm but I look forward to trying it again. The Sunday service and meal were well attended and went off very well!
- The Friday night street dance was hit by weather but moving it to the community center worked well and packed them in!
- Looking ahead
 - I am glad that so many folks were able to see the history centers and it's unfortunate that our history center in Westbrook was blacked out with the power outage.
 - This district will be facing some serious challenges with declining enrollment in the next 5 – 10 years. I hope that everyone came away with the impression that we are a proud district and that we are using our money wisely by keeping up what we have while giving kids the best options out there. We are one of the 10 lowest taxed school districts in SW MN. I would love to see alumni out there putting forth challenges to their classmates or another class to fund a capital project or adopt a wing in the school in order for us to keep our buildings in tip top shape! We have had many wonderful donations in the past 10 years that have helped us keep the quality facilities that you were used to. I like projects that a plaque can be attached to for decades. A couple examples of donations have helped us keep our budget focus on the kids since I arrived in 2001.
 1. An estate donation from Maylen and Alyce Peterson (WB) of \$500,000 put up a bus garage in Westbrook, expanded the bus garage in Walnut Grove, placed new seating in the Westbrook auditorium, poured concrete for a parking lot at the old building in Westbrook, 2nd floor renovation of the old building in Westbrook, helped grow the fitness center and put new windows in some areas of the Westbrook and the Walnut Grove School.
 2. A donation from Doug and Peg (Erickson) Schmalz of WB of \$20,000 for a greenhouse in Westbrook.
 3. A donation of \$20,000 from Alice Nordstrom Fiorani (WG) estate for the purchase of technology for the WG elementary and to install a/c in the Walnut Grove elementary / community library.
 4. A donation of \$4,000 from the Carol Anderson (WB) estate for the music department.
 5. A \$2,500 donation from the Glen Shaw family (WG) , a \$1,500 donation from Meadowland Coop and \$1,500 from the Education Association to kick off the beginning of a fitness center in the Walnut Grove School. Nearly 20 other individuals gave \$100 - \$1,000 to this project as well.

6. A donation of \$30,000 from 30 different families / groups that purchased plaques and installed new bleachers in the Walnut Grove Gymnasium.
7. A \$2,000 donation from a young farm family in WB for technology for the science and Ag departments.
8. A \$10,000 donation from Ardell Amundson and Winston Johnson (WB class of 1948) for a digital sign on Main Street of WB.
9. A \$10,000 donation from Meribel (Dahms) Steiner, Donald B. and Ruth (Benson) Johnson, Donald E. and Judy (Anderson) Johnson, and Brad & Teresa (Pemble) Munson for a digital sign on Highway 14 in WG.
10. I feel like I've missed a couple but we annually enjoy the fruits of smaller donations from the Westbrook Education Foundation and the Walnut Grove Area Foundation. Donors from all over can give to these groups. There are many ways to be a part of this and I would be happy to pay a personal visit to discuss the projects that may be near and dear to your hearts (as long as it's in the continental United States!) Westbrook and Walnut Grove are quite unique in its stubbornness to move forward and not give up their communities. There are few towns under 800 like these two that can offer what we do. I am proud to be a part of it.

Sincerely,

Loy J. Woelber, Superintendent of Schools

lwoelber@mntm.org or 507 – 828 – 6608