

LOCAL NEWS

New Principal Mitchell has many interests

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He shopped around, saw an ad for the Kawartha Board and signed on as principal at Murray Centennial. Perhaps his only regret in moving to the twin responsibilities, is that he wasn't able to finish what he started at Murray. He was there only 18 months. He's confident that his vice principal there will continue the initiatives they assembled.

As for the split responsibilities he now carries, he's done it twice before.

In one situation there were two buildings but only one school. In the second position there were two schools; one was closed and absorbed.

He's familiar with the dynamics and the issues. He knows that declining enrollments and the process of closing schools is not an easy one. That being said, he knows no more than anyone else about the future of South Cramahe and Castleton. The procedures laid out by the board for closing have been delayed, and that seems to be all there is to know right now.

Availability is the biggest concern expressed by those he has

talked to. His answer to the question is that he's always within phone reach and a 10-15 minute drive away.

In his experience with student discipline he has found that the best decisions are seldom made in the heat of the moment, so, being offsite is not necessarily a bad thing. People often want an immediate definitive action. If you act without checking into the background of the situation you don't always get the best solution.

He also sees himself as proactive not reactive. By looking fully at as many situations as he can he is able to prevent future problems. He finds he gets a better response from the kids when he gives them 'air time' to present their positions. When you've earned the respect of the kids, the respect of the parents follows.

As for scheduling his time between the schools, he has found that being at a school in the afternoon and again the next morning gives him continuity. An if parents can't find him at one school then they can call him at the other.

When children are suspended for a day he'll be calling the par-

ents before the child returns to school. If he's not at that school in the morning when the child returns, he'll catch up with him/her to be sure that everything is all right. It's a restorative approach. It puts him back together with the child on different terms than when the child was suspended.

Individual strengths should blossom under the new boss.

He sees himself as a collaborative person and expects to work in small groups with staff, students and parents to achieve mutual goals.

He wants to find the strengths and interests of his staff members and give them room to contribute these gifts. Often the curriculum doesn't allow teachers to do what they do best. Those 'extra' interests are important. He's looking for people who can bring their interests and hobbies to their job.

When it comes to interests, Mr. Mitchell has more than his share.

He could be retired now, but he loves his job. When he retired the first time in 2001, he went to a career consultant and was told this is what he should be doing. He has no immediate plans to quit

again, despite a wealth of personal interests and hobbies.

He admits he's an anomaly in that respect. He's been in education all his life and now he's back. He spent quite a bit of time looking at other things that interested him; none could be turned into a second career. So he's back, and not by default. He can do most of the things he enjoys and administer too - the best of both worlds.

He has a retired buddy who golfs 72 holes a day and skis all winter. That's not for him. Mr. Mitchell can't see himself doing that for the next 20-25 years.

This summer he will be canoeing in Algonquin. Ordinarily he goes on two of these ventures in his time off. He does interior tripping too and white-water canoeing. He even builds his own canoes.

In the winter he hits the slopes, preferring downhill to cross country skiing.

He's travelled to various locations across North America, usually on driving tours. A few summers ago he went overseas to England and Switzerland.

He's not interested in athletics alone. He paints and has a collec-

tion of his own photographs, some which he could enter in contests. He has never spent enough time with his painting to take it to a professional level. His undergraduate university degree is in music. His instrument is the clarinet. In his spare time he reads and enjoys movies.

In whatever he does, he explores his personal limits. He knows his physical limits but has things he'd like to do and intends to do because they're interesting.

While his approach to the twinning is important, it's his approach to life and his relationships that says more about the man.

He's thoughtful and is concerned that the system meets the needs of the children. It's vital to work in an environment that is happy and productive for everyone in it.

Making sure that people are treated well is important. He's frustrated when confined by rules and boxes that don't make the best situations for kids.

"I'm not trying to prove anything. I offer what I can do and am reasonably confident that I can do it."

Moto X rider airlifted to Toronto

By BOB OWEN
cochronicle@inkd.net

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Motocross races at the Mckague farm north of Castleton ended early on Sunday July 6 when 25-year-old Philip Cunningham of Newcastle misjudged a table top jump and crashed at the Lakeshore Dirt Riders (LDR) Club

Mr. Cunningham was taken by ambulance to The Big Apple Theme Park and airlifted to Sunnyside Hospital in Toronto.

Lakeshore Dirt Riders Director Roxanne Whitney said there were no other bikes involved. This is Mr. Cunningham's first year with the club. He was racing in the Novice B (Beginner) class. He had raced at least races prior to his accident.

The racers were nearing the end of the 10-minute preliminary race when Mr. Cunningham gave his bike throttle going over the table top.

Paramedics on-site were at the accident scene immediately and the Cramahe Fire Department was called on a medical assist.

Club President Blaine Poulin expressed his concern for the rider and, on Monday, was awaiting news of his medical condition. Mr. Poulin explained that almost all motocross accidents are a result of driver error. He added this is the first serious injury in the 25-year history of the club.

Mr. Poulin noted all remaining races for the day were cancelled out of respect for the injured biker.

The LDR is a family-oriented club with 400 members from across southern Ontario. Races are held at the club most summer weekends.



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