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History comes alive at town hall



The old town hall in Castleton came alive recently when students from Grades 7 and 8 acted out an historical meeting between United Empire Loyalists and representatives of the Native Peoples. Although the meeting was fictional, it was very real to the students taking part.

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Loyalists' demands to impassioned speeches about their heritage and rejection of the white man's lies. The native peoples certainly appeared more honest and appealing as personalities at this meeting, but the Loyalists had done the most preparation and discussed at length among themselves how they would counter the Indians' requests. This was a real meeting as far as the students were concerned and they did a remarkable job of staying in character as long as the meeting lasted.

The whole exercise was a dramatic illustration of what can happen when dry pedagogical ideas become reality through the individual styles and personalities of both teachers and students. There is a movement afoot in the schools and their libraries called "Partners in Action". In theory, the classroom teacher works closely with the librarian to combine instruction with research using all the resources available in the library. In practice, it can produce something as exciting as an historical meeting in the town hall.

In this case all the students made use of research materials from the library and the grade sevens actually studied their whole unit under Mrs. Enns, even building their wigwams and igloos in the library. The grade eights studied in the class with Mr. Skeaff and their meeting in the town hall was their only encounter. It was history come alive. There wasn't a Loyalist or a Native person present who won't remember this part of Canadian history without a sense of personal involvement and pride.

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NIGHT HOURS