



NEW STAFF: There was a rocky start to the school year Rockwood Centennial when tests identified mould in six portables the day before school began. Principal Deb Steplock (right) and vice-principal Bev Watts – both who are new to the school – rallied staff to move the affected classes into the gym. All of the portables should be cleaned, repaired and ready for use next week. – Frances Niblock photo

Mouldy start, but classes begin at Rockwood Centennial

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Rockwood Miller

The new principal of Rockwood Centennial School, Deb Steplock, found a silver lining in the mouldy cloud that threw last Tuesday's school opening into chaos. The day before school opened Steplock was informed that six of the school's seven portables contained potentially harmful mould and could not be used for classes.

"The teachers had spent a lot of time preparing those portables for their classes and we had two hours to dismantle everything," Steplock said in an interview on Friday. "The whole staff, even those who weren't affected, worked like fiends to set up the desks in the gym and under the circumstances it was a pretty good way to start the new year – it was sink or swim and I'd say we're swimming pretty well," Steplock said.

Six classes were moved into the gym for most of last week as crews cleaned and rebuilt the affected portables. Two classes returned to the portables before the week was out, two more were scheduled to be back in the portables by yesterday

(Wednesday) and by Monday all of them will have been cleaned and repaired to remove the mould.

Steplock, who has been a vice-principal and principal with the Wellington Board of Education for eight years, said she's finally right where she wants to be.

"I believe that a K- 8 school is where an educator can make the most difference. We can continue to nurture the older kids before they head off the high school and you have a better chance to send kids to the high school prepared to be successful," Steplock said.

There are a lot of new faces at Rockwood Centennial this year – Steplock and vice-principal Bev Watts are among 15 new staff in a school with 37 teachers and Steplock said the staff turno-

ver is a challenge that will allow the staff to bond.

"We still have a nice mix of people with experience teaching and some that are brand new and now we can choose a direction together."

Steplock said that the school is making concerted effort to improve communication with parents to allow and encourage them to be partners in their children's education.

"At the beginning of every new unit a one-page newsletter will come home outlining what is being studied, what is expected from reach student and how the student will be assessed and what deadlines must be met."

Rockwood Centennial's school council holds its first meeting of the school year on September 24 and all parents are invited to attend.

IODE bale valued at \$2,000

By DOT NORTON

Fall is here again, or almost, and the IODE is once again back to try and help in their own way. There still aren't many ladies in the group and we would welcome anyone who cares to come and join us.

It was the opening meeting and Mary Papillon and her group just added a few more calories to our diet. They certainly served up lovely desserts. Of course, one has to taste more than one. Thank you Mary. Her group would be hard to beat.

Regent Helen Jocque opened the meeting with the salute and prayer to the order. Elma Braida gave a rundown on the Leathertown Festival. It was a great success and the weatherman certainly helped. The treasurer's report was read and approved. Moved by Helen Otterbien and seconded by Kathleen Harding, all outstanding bills to be paid.

The education report showed two outstanding pupils, Kate Hendy from the girls and Derrek Scot from the boys. Congratulations to them both. There were the public school awards from the IODE.

Our bale for headquarters, valued at \$2,000, was packed by several ladies and taken to Hamilton. It was a lot of work for so few ladies. Thank you to all who helped out on this project. Joyce Sprowl and her husband Mac saw that it was taken to Hamil-

ton. Joyce has been looking after said bale for over 20 years starting in 1977 and every year she does such a great job. How could we ever do without her and the things she does for the IODE?

It is interesting to note

that in 1977 the value of the bale was \$374. Ten years later it had risen to \$1,408. In 1997 it was \$1,216. Now we are over \$2,000.

Our next meeting will be Oct. 6 at Roselea Dawkins' home at 7:30 p.m.

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