



Pulse

of Palliser Regional Schools

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Volume 2, Issue 9 • June 2010



Welcome to the final issue of The Pulse for 2009-2010 and congratulations to our staff and students for another great year! I'd like to take this opportunity to

extend best wishes to all those students who won't be returning to school this fall. I wish you all the best as you continue your education or enter the world of work full-time and pursue your ambitions.

I hope you'll look back on your time in Palliser with fond memories of friendships made, lessons learned and staff who cared.

This issue of The Pulse visits a handful of our outstanding graduates – the valedictorians of the class of 2010. These

individuals are to be congratulated for their hard work, determination and passion for their varied interests.

While some of our students will be moving beyond Palliser, we have one "student" – Palliser Pat – just starting out on a journey across our division. If you take time to read online about Pat's adventures, you'll discover just how unique each Palliser school is. While all share student-focused goals, each has its own unique character and atmosphere.

It's been a great year in Palliser. I hope you take time this month to reflect on your successes from the past year. Those successes will help energize us as we already begin looking ahead to 2010-2011.

Have a great summer!

— Kevin Gietz, Superintendent of Schools

Little buffalo on new Palliser Expedition

There's a new face roaming the halls of Palliser Regional Schools these days. Diminutive in size, but growing in stature, this furry-faced, four-legged mascot is getting students' creative juices flowing and leaving a showcase of Palliser's unique school sites in its wake.

"Palliser Pat" is the invention Darlene Hubber's Grade 5/6 Class at Coalhurst Elementary School. Since January, the

stuffed animal has been travelling in a cooler bag through Palliser's inter-school courier system. Now on his fourth school since January, Palliser Pat's adventures have been captured on a student-written wiki page which can be viewed at palliserpat.wikispaces.com.

"I was trying to think of a way to connect to other schools in Palliser and to get other teachers to use things like a Wiki (a website that invites users to contribute content) ," says Darlene.

While other school mascots, like Buzzer Bee from a school in Pennsylvania, have crossed oceans and international borders, Palliser Pat has a distinctive southern Alberta flavour and humble beginnings.

With stuffed animals of a gopher, a beaver



Calgary Christian K-6 Principal Harry Fritschy welcomes Palliser Pat to the school.

and a buffalo left over from another activity, Darlene's students picked the little bison to represent the school division on a journey of discovery. Students took on Palliser Pat as a creative writing exercise, dreaming up an elaborate history for the little bison, who overcame abandonment by its herd and was taken in and raised by Spanish field mice before venturing out and landing in Coalhurst.

The students intentionally gave Pat a non-gender-specific name, leaving the door wide open for other students to add to the critter's story.

So far, Palliser Pat has faced a fear of heights in the atrium of Coalhurst Elementary; rode school bus in Arrowwood; received dance lessons in Calgary Christian School; and most recently taken up temporary residence at Heritage Christian Academy in Calgary.

Pat's experiences at the first three schools are documented online. The web content will grow as students add to it or as viewers engage in discussions about it.

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Hats off to Kathy!

This month's Unsung Hero is Kathy Perley, the librarian and community school co-ordinator at Champion School.

Kathy was nominated by her coworkers who describe how invaluable she is.

"From planning field trips to planning school assemblies, Kathy is definitely our 'go to' staff member at Champion School," her nomination reads. "Kathy has strong ties within the community... The community of Champion is a huge supporter of our school and Kathy is a main reason for that."

In addition to her duties as the school librarian, Kathy organizes functions between school and community, assists with office duties, plans field trips, co-ordinates school fundraisers, organizes school ceremonies, plans lunch days and volunteers her time in assisting staff and students.

Her coworkers say in addition to her hard work, Kathy contributes to the caring culture of the school by regularly leaving her homemade cookies in the staffroom.

"She has even been known to ship them to a few who have moved to other locations, as they really miss the treats. If you are old enough, you may remember the Energizer Bunny ads, where they just keep going and going and going. Fortunately for us, Kathy's energy and spirit just keeps things going, and going, and going."

As this month's Unsung Hero, Kathy will receive a Palliser travel mug and a gift certificate to Moxie's.

To nominate a Palliser Unsung Hero, email pulse@pallisersd.ab.ca.



Kathy Perley

Students wins silver at Alberta Skills

A Palliser Regional Schools student earned a silver medal at the Alberta Skills Competition in Edmonton May 13-14.

Andrew Ficiur, a Grade 12 student at Kate Andrews High School in Coaldale, was the only lone competitor in a field of two-person teams in the 3D character animation event, putting him at considerable disadvantage.

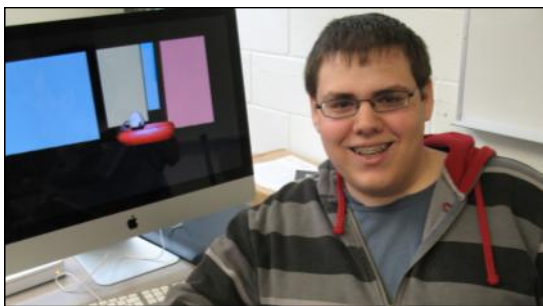
With no partner to share the workload, Ficiur had to plow through a high-pressure 13-hour race against the clock to do everything from conceive a story, complete story boards and create a computer animation, complete with music and narration.

Ficiur, who won gold at the regional skills competition in Lethbridge this spring, says in the local competition, students were given the topic in advance of the event. For provincials, there was no such luxury. Competitors were given the topic – Fairy Tale Remix – and immediately, the clock started ticking. For his unconventional fairy tale, Ficiur told the story of Humpty Dumpty's Car.

"It was very stressful," he says as he calls up his animation on You Tube in the Kate Andrews computer lab. "For something like this, I'd probably take a couple of months to do it."

The stress to create about 33 seconds of animation was worth it. Ficiur says he wasn't in it for the medal though.

"I've been doing character animation for just under a year now, and I wanted to see where I'm at compared to other people my age," he says.



Andrew Ficiur is shown as his animation, Humpty Dumpty's Car plays in the background.

"(Provincials) brought me down to earth. I don't have to be a stellar animator right now. The animations are good but they're not production level."

Ficiur remains as committed as ever to pursuing character animation as a career. He plans to work full time after graduation to save for tuition at a program known for nurturing talented animators.

"Animation is mostly observing rather than creating," he says. "You're trying to imitate life. There's a lot of little details. . . otherwise it looks stiff and robotic."

Devin Hanna, a Picture Butte High School student, also competed at provincials in welding. He won silver at regions.

Palliser was well represented at regionals. Casey West and Nick Shushelnitski of PBHS won gold in auto service; Kelsey Nadeau of Kate Andrews took silver in fashion tech; and Dawson Clark, KAHS, won silver in graphic design.

Visit [Special Events Photos](#) on Palliser's website for pictures from regionals.

Green fair in works

BP's name may be mud right now but in a little corner of southwest Calgary, the company is making waves of a positive variety.

Master's Academy received BP Canada Energy Company's A+ For Energy grant worth \$ 10,000, money that will go a long way to encouraging conservation and spreading an environmental message.

Principal Linda Dyck says the grant will support an energy fair in late October, at which students from Grades 1-6 will contribute environmental projects. The fair will be called "Renew, Reuse and Recycle: It's Elementary My Dear Watson." Grade 5 students, for example, will create a newscast. Grade 4 students, meanwhile, will conduct a waste audit. At every level the fair will fit with the curriculum.

Thanks to the grant money, every classroom will receive new recycling containers to encourage proper sorting of materials, classroom libraries will get an injection of new books and magazines on environmental topics, and the school will receive 10 video cameras and a set of Senteo Responders which will be put to use at the fair and for years to come.

The grant also includes an all-expense-paid, four-day workshop in the Kananaskis this summer, which will be attended by Master's Science teachers Evan Cappon and Brian 't Hart. The workshop promises to be a great learning experience, with lots of hands-on activities and ample materials the teachers can bring back to share with students, Linda says.

Linda encourages her colleagues across Palliser to consider applying next year for the grant. Master's was one of 38 projects approved in 2010.

Palliser Pat

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Darlene says she hopes Pat will continue to make the rounds next year through Palliser, bringing more fresh content to the Wiki and giving students across Palliser an opportunity to learn about each other.

"It's collaboration across geographic boundaries," Darlene says. "The fun thing of it is the discussion."

For teachers in Palliser interested in playing host to Palliser Pat, Darlene promises the time commitment isn't onerous and adding to the Wiki is as painless as cutting and pasting text and uploading photos.

While the Wiki is intended for Palliser students, it can be viewed by anyone who happens on the site. Do a Google search for

"Palliser Pat," and you'll find it.

Already, a picture of the diversity of Palliser has emerged. Anyone who has visited Arrowwood School knows how predominantly artwork is featured. Sure enough, Palliser Pat can be found painting there. One of the first activities mentioned during the bison's Calgary Christian visit was chapel time.

David Vriend, a Grade 5 teacher at Calgary Christian, says his experience with Palliser Pat far surpassed his expectations.

"I was a little bit skeptical of the students buying in to it. . . I thought by Grade 5 they might be 'too cool' for this, but they were thrilled."

Students brought in other stuffed animals to be Pat's "friends." They set the bison up at its own desk. One student read to Pat.

"They role played it really well," David says. "They almost treated Pat as a member of the class."

The students picked what they wanted to showcase about their school. The first thing they wanted to post was information about the chapel activities, a reflection of the school's faith focus.

"The sense of community, it really came out," David says.

The exercise meshed with the Language Arts curriculum. Students focused on word choice, organization of paragraphs and fluency. Fuelling their writing was knowing the work would have an audience.

"They know it will be read by other Grade 5 kids," he says.

Not only was the exercise beneficial to students, the teacher benefitted as well. For one thing, David hadn't contributed to a Wiki before. But that's not all.

"It brought me into contact with some other teachers in Palliser," he says. "It helps build that community of Palliser."

Saluting Palliser's Class of 2010 valedictorians

Palliser Regional Schools congratulates this year's crop of outstanding valedictorians. As has been tradition since 1995 when Palliser was created, each valedictorian is presented a medallion by the Board of Trustees. Here's a look at these young men and women's accomplishments so far and their aspirations for the future:

Christopher Bowal and Kimberly Bowal, Calgary Christian School, Calgary

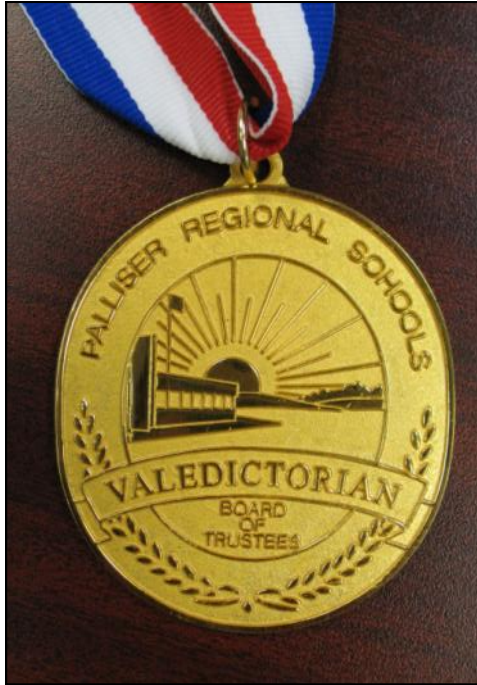
Calgary Christian has not one, but two, valedictorians this year, and it's easy to see why the school would have difficulty choosing between them. Twins Christopher and Kimberly have much in common. Both are exceptional students, have black belts in taekwondo, are life guards and swim instructors, and both took 6 ½ months off school last year to travel Australia, New Zealand and parts of Asia. How did they manage to graduate on time? They worked ahead in Grade 10. Kimberly volunteers at the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society, tending to injured or orphaned animals. Christopher has developed computer games and applications for smart phones running the Android operating system. Both have been accepted to the engineering program at the University of Calgary. Kimberly says she hopes to pursue a career in academia, while Christopher suspects he'll lean toward entrepreneurial ventures.

James Heckley, Coalhurst High School

A fixture on his school's basketball, volleyball and badminton teams, James also enjoys track and community soccer. A representative on student council throughout his high school years, James also volunteers with the Coalhurst Youth Committee which holds monthly activities in the town. James has enrolled at the University of Lethbridge where he will pursue a bachelor's of science degree.

Jodi Anderson, County Central High School, Vulcan

One of Jodi's passions is figure skating. She's been a member of the Vulcan Figure Skating Club since she was four years old. Last summer she earned her coaching certificate and since then, she's been coaching younger children to learn to skate. Jodi is also a member of the CCHS Hawks' volleyball and slo-pitch teams. A resident of Champion, Jodi volunteers with the local library's summer reading program. She has been accepted to the engineering program at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont. She eventually hopes to pursue a career in biomedical engineering.



Jessica Charles, Heritage Christian Academy, Calgary

Jessica served as the captain of the Heritage Hawks basketball and volleyball teams this year and also competed in track and field and badminton. A member of the school's vocal jazz group, Jessica has been involved in school drama productions. Jessica also leads worship at the school. The student council president spent six weeks last summer working at Peter Lougheed Hospital in a careers program that solidified her desire to become a doctor. Her first stop will be the University of Calgary biological sciences program. Jessica is one just 70 Grade 12 graduates from Calgary to be showcased in the Calgary Herald Class Act feature which profiles exceptional students. Her photo and story will be published in the newspaper as part of the series running June 1-18.

Jordan Henriksen, Kate Andrews High School, Coaldale

An injury ended her soccer career when she was in Grade 9, but it hasn't stopped Jordan from other athletic pursuits, including karate and, more recently, kickboxing. A volunteer in her school's mentorship program, Jordan served as a role model to a Grade 6 student at R.I. Baker Middle School, and volunteers in the school canteen. She's spent five years as a student of the Japanese Language School in Lethbridge. She's been accepted at the University of British Columbia where she'll pursue a bachelor's of science degree in biochemistry. Her ultimate goal is medical school.

Bronwyn Hendry, Master's College, Calgary

Bronwyn joined Master's in Grade 10 and has been an active member of the school community. A dedicated athlete, Bronwyn has played volleyball and soccer with the Master's Eagles every year. She went to Dominica with Master's College Global Impact teams where she helped build a playground, and has shown leadership as both a member of the student council and yearbook committee. Bronwyn expressed her creativity and dramatic flair as the character Lola in *Footloose* and as head of costumes for *Fame: the Musical*. In the fall, Bronwyn is attending Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C., to pursue a degree in communications.

Hailey Cervo, Noble Central School, Nobleford

Academically strong, sports-minded and outdoor-loving Hailey Cervo attracted considerable media attention last November when she was invited to spend Remembrance Day on Parliament Hill after her poem, "Living in His Shadow," won a national competition sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion. Cervo also serve as a mentor to a younger student at Noble Central and volunteered on the grad committee. In her community, she's involved in soccer and curling. This fall, she plans to attend Lethbridge College's Environmental Assessment and Restoration Program before transferring to university for her degree.

James Veldman, PASS+, Coaldale

Now that he's graduating Grade 12, James plans to focus fully on growing a business, Anomaly Street Wear, which he and his friend started a year ago. The business designs, markets and sells hoodies, hats and T-shirts. While his business partner focuses on the graphic design, James is responsible for the business side of this venture. A passionate snow- and skateboarder, James has been accepted to the Business School of Lethbridge College.

Brittany Vogel, Picture Butte High School, Picture Butte

Brittany played high school basketball and volleyball and countless intramural spots. This year she's been a mentor to a Grade 7 student at her school. A lifeguard and swim instructor, Brittany has been accepted to the nursing program at Lethbridge College, where she'll study for two years before transferring to the University of Lethbridge. Her education likely won't end there though. Brittany says she hopes to become either a nurse practitioner or clinical instructor. Her inspiration is her mom, a registered nurse.