

There is nothing as bright as the twinkling eyes of a 9 year old. Being 9 years old, in grade 3, is a magic time for everyone. Yesterday I watched the twinkle in over 185 grade 3's from all over the area. They were part of school groups that came to the Lang Pioneer Village to see what people lived like long ago.

My part in the special day was to be an "actor" in the Carpenter's Shop that was built in 1856. All of the tools in the shop were over 100 years old as well and they still work.

My task has also been, a few weeks ago, to "train" (actually help) a university student, Adam, to be the interpretive guide for the shop. Adam has graduated with two degrees so far and will soon have his third. He is a good student to work with. By yesterday he had made a new box for his own bride to be. He gets married in a month's time.

Yesterday I volunteered to help Adam, in that the flow is non stop with the students coming through the shop. With 185 students in the village it is hard to get any breather between groups that come into the shop. There is between 6 to 20 students in each group. You simply tell the story over and over again trying to capture their interest and stir their imagination.



As I sat on the log bench carving the piece of wood that I cut from maple log, the children watched with fascination. Each cut was spell binding for them. They were watching an old man from long ago make something.

I looked up at them and welcomed them to the carpentry shop. I then explained that I was making a "one legged milking stool". Picture the response. The group of children together slowly tipped their heads to one side and then straightened. Their eyes opened wide and a puzzled look came over their faces. They didn't know what a milking stool was – let alone a one legged milking stool.

Then I asked the magic question. "Do you know what a milking stool is?" The responses were fun.

"You sit milk on it?" "You use it in a factory?" "I don't know..." – were the top three responses. Most just retained the quizzical look as others attempted answers.

My second magic question was, "Where does the milk come from?"

"The factory...?" "Oh I know... the store!" "The farm...?", and "I know, I know... the cow!" were the top four answers yesterday.

Then I went into a series of questions that lead us to where and how low the "milk handles" were under the cow; and how you had to sit down for a while as you milked the cow. It was then that the twinkle came, their faces shone and the brightness bounced from their eyes. They understood completely – even though we didn't have a cow to milk.

Teachers and parents standing near by grinned as the response came each time.

It is this "Ahaa" moment that must keep teachers going each week all year long. It is that burst of delight when they catch it... that makes you have that "can't wait feeling" to get back and do it again. I know that it has done that for me. The Wow Factor for sure! I enjoyed it more than the kids did.

I am a community volunteer. I share what I know and what I like to do. The neat part is there is a world waiting to listen to the accounts and history. Outside of the teaching profession... volunteering has to be the next greatest occupation when it comes to kids.



Pause...

Oh – so what is a one legged milk stool? Well it is a stool that has one leg. It is better than three legged or four legged stools in that it can allow you to shift slightly from side to side as the cow moves back and forth from time to time – without taking your hands off the “handles” and having to pick the stool up.

For grade three kids it made perfect sense. And for the old man making it – it is much quicker to make than the three or four legged versions... especially with 185 students asking questions.

Thank you to the Lang Village people for letting me be apart of what is happening in your small community. All of you are so cool!

~ Rev. Murray Lincoln ~ Volunteer