

# Pine Knot News

The Pine Knot News covers six school districts, not an easy task for a reporting staff of two with a few stringers to fill in here and there. We do not accept a lack of staffing to result in a lack of coverage. It is especially true with the two smallest districts we cover, Wrenshall and Carlton. They are not only the smallest in our coverage area but among the smallest in the state. They do not get ignored by us, not that we have a choice. These small neighboring districts have myriad problems related to their budgets and enrollment and, in the case of Wrenshall, a board that seems too easily distracted from the tasks at hand.

Carlton and Wrenshall have talked about consolidating their two school districts for decades, with each effort failing on territorial issues. So, in a sense, they have been twined. But not in the past year or so. Carlton has gone on its own, seeking remedy for its draining student population by teetering on entering, and then backing out of, a tuition agreement with the largest district in the region, Cloquet. We followed the tribulations of that effort, one that wouldn't have had much public notice if we hadn't been in the rooms where the planning happened, most often alone with the school board. Eventually, the Carlton public did rally to keep its school as is, in emotional public meetings that we covered from gavel to gavel. Now we have to keep an eye on its budget.

In Wrenshall, the public, much like in places across the country, is learning that elections have consequences. Its board has been wrangling over issues like curriculum and basic decorum by board members in the past year. We have been there to capture it all, often spurring public outcry after printing our aggressive reporting and editorials on how this once darling district, which appealed to parents through open enrollment for its class sizes and quality education, has been literally brought to its knees by the behavior and actions of a splinter group of the board. It is ongoing, and we will be there to keep the public informed and beg for some calm in the storm.

— Pine Knot News