



Go Back

Email this story

Print this story

Letter to the editor

Discuss

**Wildcat newsletters**  
**ARIZONA** • sign up now  
U of A basketball coverage

Ads by Google

**Elementary Teacher Jobs**

Become an Elementary Teacher Online Flexible Schedules. Financial Aid.  
[Teachers.us.com/Elementary](http://Teachers.us.com/Elementary)

**Teach Elementary School**

Earn Your Accredited Bachelor in Elementary Education Online. Apply!  
[www.WGU.edu](http://www.WGU.edu)

**Online Teaching Degree**

Get a Teaching Degree in Your Spare Time from Home!  
[Teaching.iLearn101.com](http://Teaching.iLearn101.com)

**Science Teaching Master's**

Become a Science Teacher with a a Master's in Science Grade K-8.  
[Walden.EarnMyDegree.com](http://Walden.EarnMyDegree.com)

**Becoming a Teacher?**

Request free info from teaching schools near you. Start today!  
[www.do-something.com/teach-car](http://www.do-something.com/teach-car)

## NORTHWEST

### Thrills and chills are in store for Wilson teacher

By Andrea Rivera

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Tucson, Arizona | Published: 03.12.2009

Wilson K-8 School science teacher Betsy Wilkening will soon be on top of the world, literally.

Come Sunday she is scheduled to arrive in Barrow, Alaska, the northernmost settlement in North America, to conduct polar research with researcher Harry Beine as part of PolarTREC, which is funded through the U.S. National Science Foundation.

The TREC in PolarTREC stands for Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating.

advertisement



#### \$2 Million in Scholarships for Working Parents Going Back to School

To help working moms further their education eLearners.com... [Read More.](#)

#### More Articles

- [Credit Checks that Could Hurt You](#)
- [Sex Pheromones: Excitement is in the Air](#)
- [Raise Your 2009 Credit Score Now](#)
- [Want to See Your Credit Score?](#)

Wilkening applied for the program back in September and her work with Beine, who is an associate researcher in the Land, Air and Water Resources Department at the University of California at Davis, will allow her to contribute to future predictions on climate change in the arctic.

More importantly, she wants to return to her seventh-grade science classroom and have her students understand how their actions affect climate change.

"I want them to make the connections," Wilkening said. "To understand how these foreign ice

worlds are being affected by actions that we are doing down here."

Wilkening's three-week expedition, which is scheduled to conclude April 3, will have her working with the Ocean, Atmosphere, Sea Ice, Snowpack, or OASIS, Interactions program, which is an international program involving scientists from other countries.

"They're looking at the physical and chemical fluxes between the snow, the atmosphere, the ice and the water," Wilkening said about the OASIS Interactions program.

She will gather snow samples with researcher Beine three to four times a day. The samples will then be analyzed for trace chemicals and different pollutants.

The average temperature in Barrow at this time of year is 13 degrees below zero, Wilkening said.

Wilkening had a chance to acclimate herself to the freezing temperatures when she attended an orientation session last month in Fairbanks, Alaska.

While there, she said, on the warmest day it was only 20 degrees.

She will come prepared, though.

Her suitcase will be packed with plenty of arctic gear, including fleece, a lightweight down jacket, a parka, cold-weather Sorel boots, wool socks, liner gloves and a pair of even heavier gloves, a balaclava mask that covers the whole head and some glacier glasses.

"I feel like that kid from 'A Christmas Story.' It's a lot of clothes. If I fall over, they will have to pick me up," she said.

Wilkening's students are excited their teacher was selected to participate in PolarTREC — she is only one of 17 teachers taking part in a PolarTREC expedition — and want her to bring back photos and stories to share with her classes.

Last Friday, her students were learning about volcanoes.

"You can tell she's really interested in everything she teaches us and it makes us interested," seventh-grader Lauren Chavez said. "She's thorough about everything."

Seventh-grader Kenidee Thompson wants to see photos of snow when Wilkening returns.

Kenidee agreed that Wilkening makes science interesting.

"She's very helpful and I've learned a lot of stuff from her about science," she said.

Wilkening is in her fourth year at Wilson, but teaching hasn't been her only career.

She worked as an engineer for 13 years and has been a stay-at-home mom to her two children, both now in high school.

Wilkening has also taught at the preschool and high school levels, but said she has an affinity for middle school.

"I enjoy this age because the kids still get excited about doing things and I want to keep that excitement going."



1 Comments on this story

Buy Daily Star photo reprints



Wilson K-8 science teacher Betsy Wilkening talks with seventh-grader Thomas Golden. Wilkening will head to Alaska to conduct polar research, and she'll share the experience with students.

Jim Davis / Arizona Daily Star

Follow Betsy Wilkening's expedition

Wilkening will post blogs, photos and videos during her three-week stay in Barrow, Alaska, online at [www.polarrec.com/ocean-atmosphere-sea-ice-and-snowpack-interactions](http://www.polarrec.com/ocean-atmosphere-sea-ice-and-snowpack-interactions).

#### Other articles by Andrea Rivera:

[Marana district to trim jobs if state cuts funds](#)

[Students ready robot for battle](#)

[Quick-acting girl comes to brother's rescue](#)

[Youngsters are recognized for bravery, heroic actions](#)

[School notes](#)

[Group forms to fight deeper school cuts](#)

[Just a face in the crowd no more](#)

[Young scientists satisfy curiosity](#)

[Group forms to fight deeper school cuts](#)

[School notes](#)

**TopJobs** [View all Top Jobs](#)

**General**

- Mystery shopper**
- Administrative & Professional**  
Cumberland Therapy Services  
School Psychologist

**Online Teaching Colleges**  
Earn More \$ w/ an Online Degree! Fall Classes Filling Fast – Enroll  
[iLearn101.com/Teaching](http://iLearn101.com/Teaching)

**Elementary Teacher Jobs**  
Become an Elementary Teacher Online Flexible Schedules. Financial Aid.  
[Teachers.us.com/Elementary](http://Teachers.us.com/Elementary)

**Want to Teach Math?**  
Earn an Accredited Degree Online & Become a Math Teacher. Apply Today!  
[www.wgu.edu](http://www.wgu.edu)

Ads by Google

Get Arizona Daily Star home delivery and SAVE BIG!



EMAIL THIS STORY



PRINT THIS STORY



LETTER TO THE EDITOR



DISCUSS

Copyright © 2009

[Go Back](#)