

'Be more intent' just one way to prevent accidents

BY INDI RUHE

According to TeenDrivers.com, 16 and 17-year-olds represent only 25% of all drivers, but they are involved in nearly 11% of all crashes.

These accidents aren't limited to I-75. According to several students, at 3:05 PM, the RCHS parking lot becomes a danger zone.

According to RCHS Principal John Hale, an additional exit to the current student parking lot is being planned, however funding is not available.

Until then, there are things students can do to keep that car ding-free.

"Be more intent," is one suggestion Mt. Vernon police officers Brian Doan and Mike Peters gave.

According to Officer Doan, when people are aware of things going on around them, they have more control of their driving.

"Not only pay attention to your

vehicle, be more aware of other drivers around you," suggests former drivers' education teacher Mr. Pat Greene.

Speed also contributes to accidents in the parking lot, according to grounds monitor Linda Taylor, who has witnessed some parking lot accidents.

"Don't listen to other people when you're driving," said senior Eric Shafer. This was the leading cause of his wreck in the parking lot.

If students are involved in an accident, there is one thing they can do to prevent injuries.

Mr. Greene recommends that people need to wear their seat belts.

In a recent study done by TeenDrivers.com 70% of teens who were involved in a wreck and wore their seat belts survived their accident.



The student parking lot becomes a battle zone at 3:05 as students line up to leave. (photo by Cassie Smith)

Preparation long for exchange students

BY JAMIE ORNELLA

German exchange students Doris Bismarck, 16, and Jens Strietzel, 18, (seniors) are completing a year in America at RCHS.

For these and other exchange students being able to come to America involves a lot of time, planning, and money.

For these students a year in America begins months ahead. Bismarck even began the process of filling out the information in August of 2000.

According to Bismarck, academically applicants should have a C or better average. Both she and Strietzel are in the top three of their class. They both had to have extensive physicals, many immunization shots, and a passport to even come to America. Scholarships are available for those who need money because a year in America is very costly.

"Before coming to America my family paid \$6,000 for me to come to America. Each month I receive about \$500 a month to live on," said Strietzel. After all the packing, preparing, and good-byes, Strietzel and Bismarck were ready for America.

The two exchange students are the first in their family to make the trip.

"This is my dream now," said Bismarck about coming to America.



Doris Bismarck began planning almost a full year in advance for her exchange period in the United States. (photo by Jamie Ornela)

"Leaving my family was hard but I love it here," said Strietzel.

Change is always hard but both students said Rockcastle County was very nice and RCHS students treated them well.

Bismarck and Strietzel are adjusting very well to RCHS. Bismarck is on the varsity volleyball team and Strietzel is the kicker for the varsity football team.

For Strietzel and Bismarck this is their first year for an organized school sport. In Germany, schools do not have sports teams. To participate in a sport, they have to go to a club after school. The clubs usually practice about twice a week.

Strietzel played soccer for 14 years but never seen a football till he came over to America. Bismarck practiced volleyball for a club in Germany. Both students are doing very well in their sports. Each has specific goals they want to accomplish this year.

"This year I hope to learn English and reach the state finals in football," Strietzel said.



Art teacher Les Scalf is just one of seven new teachers at RCHS. Look for a story featuring these new faculty members in the next issue of *The Rocket*. (photo by Tim Tyler)