

The Rocket

Rockcastle County High School

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There more to RCHS's Pam Powell than meets the eye

BY JESSICA DENNY

After 27 years of teaching, Ms. Pam Powell is saying "adios" to RCHS.

Though only seven of those years were spent in Rockcastle County, Ms. Powell will leave behind well-established reputation: as a generous, caring, and strong individual.

Ms. Powell is known for setting a high standard. She attributes this to her parents, who worked very hard to give her a lot of opportunities forcing her to never lower her standards in life. Powell went on to college after high school because of the dreams her parents instilled in her. During college her parents paid for her to go on a three week trip to France, a trip that greatly influenced her life.

"The trip was the chance of a lifetime, and it made me want to travel again," said Powell.

It was only through twist of fate that Pam Powell even became Ms. Powell, Spanish teacher.

She changed colleges and majors many times. First, she wanted to major in medical technology, and then she wanted to be an international flight attendant. For this she would need to know different languages, so she majored in French and chose to minor in Spanish. She was qualified enough for the job, but airlines were not hiring. Afterwards Powell's mother suggested she become a teacher. She took her mother's advice, and has been teaching ever since.

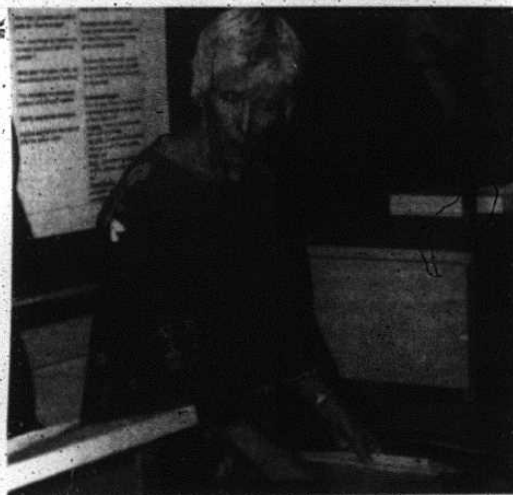
She has taught English, French, and Spanish during her many years of teaching.

Fate threw another twist in Powell's life in 1996. She was diagnosed with Hepatitis C.

Powell had been sick throughout the school year, but wanted to wait until summer to go to the doctor.

In the meantime, she did her own research, and knew that she probably had Hepatitis C. This knowledge was helpful to her when the doctor actually gave her the news. However, her family was very emotional.

Powell said she told them she would get sick every now and then, but she would be okay.



Spanish teacher Pam Powell will be retiring this year.

Powell fought her illness and continued teaching, demonstrating a strength few people knew she possessed.

She received much support from arts & humanities teacher Allene Cornelius, who also happens to be a registered nurse.

"She has given me advice about my illness throughout our friendship," says Ms. Powell.

Ms. Cornelius benefited from the friendship, and Ms. Powell's generous nature, as well.

"She has been my best friend since I came here," said Cornelius, who began teaching here in 1996. "She took me under her wing and helped me during my first year."

Cornelius believes Powell is a "giving and caring person who has been like a second mother to some of her students."

Ms. Powell's giving nature is demonstrated in simple ways that

Portfolio scores increase, outlook positive for CATS

BY JESSICA THACKER

Again students were pushed to the limits during CATS testing. Last year, students didn't perform up to par and left this year's students with the burden of improving scores. But the pressure wasn't too much, because many teachers and staff members believe the results will show the demands helped.

The writing portfolios already show an improvement over last year. Last year there were thirty-eight novices on senior portfolios. This year that number decreased by 20% to only eleven. The amount of seniors to score Proficient increased from forty-three last year to fifty-three this year.

These results already have the teacher's confidence level higher.

English IV teacher Jennifer Mattingly believes that the year long senior English class made a positive impact upon portfolio scores.

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New attendance policy brings mixed results

BY AUDREY BURKE

At the beginning of this year a new attendance policy took effect that caused much commotion, but Assistant Principal Betty Jo McKinney, who primarily works with attendance, says the new policy has been working.

However, Principal John Hale believes there will still be some "waiting involved before the real effects are seen."

After reviewing preliminary reports McKinney is expecting up to 95% for overall attendance during the latest school month (which is 20 school days).

"There's been a lot of good days since the weather has improved," said McKinney. Also, she believes students now have a better awareness of the policy, which has con-

tributed to the rise in attendance this spring.

The numbers from the past few years give an explanation as to why there has been an emphasis on attendance. For the 1997-98 school year the overall attendance percentage was 95.2%. The next year, 1998-99, saw the overall attendance percentage dive to 93.4%. Attendance hasn't risen out of the 93 percentile range since then, but it came very close last year at 93.9%.

Ms. McKinney said that she was hoping for continuous growth, while Mr. Hale stated a good goal that is looked toward is 95%, good attendance for a high school.

"Attendance is important," explained Hale because school fund-

ing comes from daily attendance. The daily allotment per student is approximately \$30. To explain the system Hale gave this analogy: "A school may have enrolled a 1,000 students, but if only 500 show up, the school will only receive funds for those 500."

In other words, the supplies for the absent students will be a waste. To give an example of the impact of attendance money, last year the district lost over \$200,000 due to excessive absences.

Reasons such as this is why the attendance is being stressed. However, opinions vary amongst the staff about the effectiveness of the

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