

Science Fair un-"fair" to Students Should be OPTIONAL

By JESSICA RIDOLE

When you hear "science fair" what do you think?

I think of long grueling hours of research, experimenting, decorating, and preparing. I also think of the two weeks of after school experimenting and writing I must do to complete my project.

Even though my science fair is over and done, I still believe the whole project should not be mandatory. Science fair should be optional for three main reasons. There are students involved in extracurricular activities, the overwhelming amount of time that is spent, and the amount of instructional time that is wasted on the projects that could be used to further teach the subject.

"Science fair is very important to exit standards and to the students. It is where the students have to make choice and budget their time," said science teacher Stephanie Harmon. "Extracurricular activities aren't required, science fair is, that is what should come first."

Teachers do make a great point, but I still say that it should be optional because of the time and also the money that must be spent for the projects. Some kids that aren't involved in sports or aren't part of a team yet they still have things like work and families that they have obligations to. Why should they have to put so much unavailable time and money into something that isn't life altering and just a grade in a class that they already have to do homework in?

Secondly many students at RCHS are involved with extracurricular activities from volleyball to academic team. This leaves those students in a bind for time when it comes to science fair.

Not only is time and involvement a factor, but the time lost in class is also. Your teacher may have to give up two to three days to science fair and those days are lost and cannot be gained back. This can cut down on more important things like preparations for upcoming test, labs, and even portfolios.

By PAULA ROWLAND

All of my life I have heard people say to take chances: "Seize the day, Paula Ann!" I just never took the time to think of how many decisions we make each day and how they truly affect us. However, as I have matured, I have learned that you do what makes you happy, as long as you also do what is expected. You have to choose white or black every day of your life—it's inevitable. Some decisions are going to be easy while others will take some deep concentration. This is all common sense. What I'd like to know is what choice do you make when both choices are expected of you?

Earlier this month, I had the choice of either staying an entire four days with my friends, or I could travel over 200 miles to Pikeville and visit my 92 year old great-grandmother. I knew that my friends expected me to hang with them and be crazy. But I also knew that my family would expect me to WANT to spend time with my great-grandmother. I had no idea how to decide...but I'm glad I finally made the decision I did.

The plans were to leave out bright and early that Thursday morning with my mom and travel the two and a half hour journey to the "mountains" (as we call Pikeville and Vicca). We would meet up with my grandmother who had been there for the entire week and then spend three whole days at my great-grandmother's house, enjoying the simple things in life.

I would be lying if I said I wasn't excited about the trip. Sure, I missed my friends, but I would see them

again. Besides, I figured that weekend to be a sort of "girl's weekend out." Four generations slept in that house that weekend: my mom, my grandmother, my great-grandmother, and me.

With no television or radios, most teenagers wouldn't have lasted past the first night. For me, however, the excitement just kept building.

I loved hearing the stories of how my Granny Fouts [great-grandmother] had sold moonshine during the early twenties; how their family worked in the coal mines and fields night and day, and how they had moved there as sharecroppers. I had never known these things about my family. I had always been taught that life back then was hard; and you just didn't bring back up hard feelings.

That weekend held many "firsts" for me. I'll be 17 years old in a week, and I had never in my life seen my Granny Fouts take her long silver hair down...until that weekend.

She carefully pulled the pins and hair bows out, smoothing her hair back with her hands, then slowly brushing in gentle strokes. I had learned from her when I was young that a lady doesn't take her hair down in front of people. This is why tears grazed my face as I watched her.

Picture albums, stories of old times, and strings of pearls awaited me that weekend. Memories passed down by generations of the three generations of that house, and memories made by me to pass down to other generations.

I didn't want to come home that weekend. The simple life of working hard to get what you deserve had made my heart ache for a better understanding of my past.

As I reached out to grasp facts and stories of the years that have passed, my grandmother and great-grandmother pushed for me to sustain a future for the years to come.

I'll never forget the lessons I learned that weekend. I believe God has miraculous ways of showing us the true meanings of life and the things that are really important. I'll never forget the words I heard my great-grandmother say as I walked out the door that Saturday: "I love you, Paulie, and do good things in life."

Never in my life had I heard her say she loved me.

Now the simple things, such as her telling me she loved me, and the necklace of blue pearls she gave to me that she had bought back in the 1930s, will mean more to me than ever. Words will never be able to express how lucky and blessed I feel. I've never been more thankful for the opportunity I was given. I only wish that everyone else could experience what I have. It gives you an entirely different outlook on what "life" means.

Memories were passed down by three generations that weekend, and memories were made by me to pass down to others to follow.

I would love to receive your opinion on this matter. If you have comments (teachers and students), please send them to us in room

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Down the Hall: Students & staff fears revealed

What is your greatest fear?

"Snakes, because they can hide and they bite."
Cheri Cunagin

"Dying at a young age, because I want to live my life to the fullest."
Justin Albright

"Lunchroom food because it crawls away."
John Phillips

"Ducks, because they quack."
Amanda Shafer

"Loss of a child—I would be devastated and wouldn't be able to go on."
Nancy Russell

