



MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO

High Street School first-grade teacher Cindy Byrd works with her class last week.

Excitement, satisfaction

All in a day's work for Byrd

BY JOHN HAUER

For the Daily Call
editorial@dailycall.com

PIQUA — High Street Primary School teacher Cindy Byrd lives for the excitement and satisfaction of helping her 22 first-graders learn something new. "I love kids, and I love to see kids get excited by what happens in my classroom," she said. "I get just as excited as the students."

Byrd was born in Missouri; then, the family moved to Day-

ton, and she graduated from Centerville High School in 1972. She was a member of French Club, but most of her time was spent playing clarinet and saxophone in the marching band and jazz band. She was in the orchestra for several of the high school musicals.

Early on, she knew she wanted to become a teacher. "Two of my aunts in Missouri were teachers,"

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she said. "My parents Barbara and Charles Pray instilled in all their children that we would go to college." Byrd chose the University of Dayton to pursue a degree in elementary and special education. "I chose UD because they made their education students go out to observe real schools as early as the freshman year," she said. "UD is known for the strength of its education department, and a neighbor was the assistant dean of the school of education." She earned her bachelor's degree in 1975. Later, Byrd received a master's degree in education from the University of Dayton.

Teaching positions were scarce in the mid-70s, so Byrd subbed for awhile in Kettering and West Carrollton schools. "This gave me valuable experience in a variety of grade levels and subjects," she said. Finally, at the start of the school year in

1976, she was hired by Piqua City Schools to teach special education at Piqua Central High School. "I was rifled after one year due to fewer students in the program, but given a first- and second-grade split class position at North Street Elementary," she said. "I transferred to third grade at Staunton School and taught there for a year." North Street School closed that year. "There weren't enough third-graders at Staunton, so I moved to a first-grade class at High Street," she said. "And of course Staunton closed later on."

Things got much more stable when she moved to High Street, and she has been there for the last 33 years. "I was beginning to think I was responsible for closing buildings," she said with a smile. "But, I was lucky and found a perfect home at High Street."

Visiting Byrd's first-grade classroom offers an

insight into the excitement generated by the young students. A green Lucky the Leprechaun figure is hanging from the ceiling. "We just finished the St. Patrick's Day unit," she said. "The kids and their families devised traps to catch Lucky. The kids talked about and wrote about what Lucky did to our room and what they would do with his Pot of Gold."

Byrd credits the first-grade team of teachers at High Street with helping each other and coordinating everything for the benefit of the students Ashley Berry, Jill Miller, Kim Didier, Becky Garrett, and Byrd work well together. "We are constantly sharing new ideas and finding the best ways to do things," Byrd said. "We have to be on the same page since we have several sets of twins and triplets in our classrooms."

Other duties that Byrd has done over the years

include serving as the Social Committee chairperson for the building, Piqua Education Association building rep and PEA secretary, adviser to countless bake sales, and PTA treasurer. "Our bake sales provided money that was used to purchase needed playground equipment," she said.

At home, Byrd enjoys reading and doing Yoga at the YWCA. She and her husband Tom, a former tool and die machinist, have been married 33 years. They have one daughter, Tina, who is a PHS graduate and just earned her bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University. Cindy is finishing her 36th year as a teacher and will be retiring at the end of the school year. "I will miss the students and staff," she said. "But, I am looking forward to being home and having the time to do whatever I want to do."