



MIKE ULLERY'S STAFF PHOTO

Wendy Hastings instructs her class in a computer lab at Piqua Junior High School last week.

Teacher sums it up quick and easy

“I love my job.” — Wendy Hastings

BY JOHN HAUER

For the Daily Call
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PIQUA — Wendy Hastings, eighth-grade language arts teacher at Piqua Junior High School, sums it up quick and easy. “I love my job, and this is an exciting time to be in education,” she said. “I tell my students to do something you love to do, and I am certainly doing that.”

Hastings was born in Nashville, Tenn. The family lived in Huntsville, Ala. for awhile, then, moved to Brownsville,

class act



Texas, where her father Elmo Hastings became the utilities director for the city. “And, that’s how we came to Piqua in 1978, when Dad was hired as the utilities director for the city of Piqua,” she said.

She graduated from Brownsville High School in 1973, where she was in National Honor

Society and was a member of Student Council. “The school was huge,” she said. “There were 1,000 students in my graduating class, and we went to school on a split half-day schedule because there were so many students.”

Hastings credits her parents, Elmo and Mildred, with instilling in her the importance of education and being a life-long learner. “I wanted to become a teacher,” she said. “It has been a decision I have never regretted.” She enrolled at Southwest Texas State

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University in San Marcos, Texas and earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education K-8 in 1977. Later, she received a master’s degree in teacher education from Wright State University.

She took a job as a kindergarten teacher with the Brownsville system. This lasted a year, then, the family moved to Piqua. Hastings taught for three and a half years at the Church of the Nazarene School in Piqua. “I subbed for a year with Piqua City Schools,” she said. “And, I was lucky to be hired full-time as a Language Arts teacher at Bennett Junior High.” She has been teaching eighth grade language arts ever since, moving to the new junior high building when it opened in 1999.

“I was fortunate to have started at Bennett,” she said. “Bob Luby, the principal who hired me, modeled the importance of structure and discipline. He stressed having a mastery of your subject area.” Hastings learned much from the Bennett staff. “They taught me how to have a passion for what I do in my classroom and a love for my students,” she said. “My early years teaching at Bennett made me the teacher that I am today.”

Hastings, a Martha Holden Jennings Scholar, imparts to her students that they should strive to do something in life that they love doing. “I try to awaken their passion in something,” she said. “Every student has

their strengths and their favorite things and activities. My challenge is to help the students find them.”

The technology advances in education over the past ten years have been very exciting. The old 16mm projector and filmstrips have given way to Smartboards, Slates, and Power Points. “It really is an exciting and challenging time,” Hastings said. “I have adjusted my methods to take advantage of all the advancements. Students have instant access to information, and they are doing things that we could have never done just a few years ago.”

Hastings is proud that she and Brenda Clement were the very first advisers for a chapter of the Muse Machine for Piqua City Schools. Muse Machine offers in-school programs in a variety of academic and arts areas. There are also after school field trips to cultural events and places. Hastings has also served as the junior high newspaper adviser and the first advisor for the Kiwanis sponsored Builders Club.

Away from school, Hastings and Don Reed, a retired teacher for Piqua City Schools, enjoy gardening, traveling and reading. They often travel to Alabama where Hastings has family. Hastings has three sons and a daughter. Sara is an artist in Piqua. Sean is a freshman at Wright State University. Andrew lives in Columbus, and Sam is a sixth grade language arts teacher in Kissimmee, Fla.