

Swiger takes learning

BY DEANA LANDERS

For The Dominion Post

Lynette Swiger, third-grade teacher at Monongah Elementary School, grew up on Bunner Ridge, outside of Fairmont. She attended Mt. Claire, a one-room school for grades one through eight, with 17 other children.

When she was in the sixth grade, the school closed and she and the other students were bused into town. But, Swiger's teacher at Mt. Claire, Janice Lake, left a lasting impact on her — Lake was one the reasons Swiger decided to be a teacher.

"She was an exciting teacher," Swiger said. "She made learning and attending school fun."

Swiger's grandfather also went to Mt. Claire. He completed all eight grades and never went any further in school, and yet, Swiger said, he was one of the smartest people she has ever known.

"He had great common sense and a truly analytic mind,"

84 *Lynette Swiger*

Swiger said. "He could reason through anything from complex math problems to everyday household fix-it issues with most of his calculations and strategies being done mentally. He also had a high regard for teachers and that had a lot to do with my choosing a career in education."

Swiger received her bachelor's degree from Fairmont State College and went on to get her master's degree in early childhood education at WVU.

She is taking graduate courses at Fairmont State to add a reading specialization to her master's degree. In 2008, Swiger was one of only 20 teachers across the country chosen by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin-

Lynette Swiger

AGE: 51

FAMILY: Husband, Brad; daughters, Abby and Emily

HOBBIES: Playing the hammered dulcimer and collecting old tunes from West Virginia and preserving them so they can be passed on; beekeeping, reading and gardening

QUOTE: "Live joyfully."

istration to participate in the Teacher At Sea program. The program, coordinated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), gives teachers the opportunity to study at sea aboard research and survey ships. Then, armed with new understanding and experience, teachers bring this knowledge back to their classrooms.

g to the high seas



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y Star, a NASA ship regu-
sed to retrieve the space
s solid rocket boosters,
g from North Carolina to
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teachers' mission was to
data about coral reefs to
etermine habitat coverage,
pecies present and density of
cies. The data will be used
termine which areas will be
to commercial fishing to
the habitats and fish popula-
to recover.

"When a teacher has a real-life connection with what is being taught, it immensely enriches classroom lessons," Swiger said. "The children respond so positively to lessons when a

"The Teacher At Sea program gave me an opportunity to return to the classroom with new information about the ocean," Swiger said. "I didn't know much at all about the ocean and the critters that live there. My students had studied the ecosystems and food webs of land animals, and now I can share more knowledge about these same issues with the ocean. I can now understand and can explain why the coral reefs are so vital to ocean survival and to us as humans."

"Her class is so interesting that I like to stop in and listen to her teach when I get a chance," said Doris Cain, nurse at Monongah Elementary School. "One of the students I take care of is in Mrs. Swiger's class. The kids take to her so well. They light up when it is time to go into her class."

Swiger taught third grade at East Park for two years, first grade at Mannington for five years and has been teaching third grade at Monongah Ele-

mentary for 19 years.

"I like the enthusiasm of kids," she said. "I like seeing children become excited about something I have taught them. It is my desire to create enthusiasm and passion for learning their entire lives. Everywhere they go and whatever they do they can learn. In exchange, I have learned from children to live life joyfully. They have such exuberance."

In 2007, Swiger won the Gilder-Leahrman History Teacher of the Year award and was chosen by the Trans-Atlantic Outreach Program to go on a teacher study tour of Germany.

"Her trip was wonderful for us, too," said Patsty Dickens, a third-grade teacher at Monongah Elementary. "When she came back, she spent time teaching her fellow co-workers and the community about Germany. Lynette takes every opportunity to learn and grow in her profession and encourages other teachers to do the same."