

Fourth graders Christy Burgess, Lindsey Gaffney, Drew Neisler and Anna Ramey point to their pegs on the North Carolina map in the gymnasium of West School.



Kerri Brutko, Michelle Quiram, Alicia James, David Phannareth and Tyler Falls, left to right, study a map of North Carolina at West School gymnasium.

JOGGING ACROSS N.C.

West 4th graders combine P.E., Social Studies to learn about home state

West School 4th graders are jogging across North Carolina but they haven't left the campus.

Now they are "running across North Carolina," not just running around the gym.

The students run during physical education once a week and they record the miles they run on a big North Carolina map.

"This activity also shows the students that there is much more in an atlas than just map information because it allows them to combine information from several sources and present creative projects to their Social Studies class," says fourth grade teacher Susan Deaton.

PE teacher Lisa Stewart is working in a team effort with Deaton and fourth grade teacher Bonnie Bryson to develop enthusiasm which ran so high among fourth graders that the fifth graders asked to be included in the PE activity since they had already completed the course work in 4th grade last year.

"We're excited," said Stewart, who said the boys and girls have learned to read a map, follow a specific route and approximate distance on a map. An extra benefit is the aerobic conditioning. The running they must do in physical education becomes easier and more interesting with a specific goal to achieve.

This week the kids are half-way to Asheville, jogging two miles a day or combined laps of 40 miles per 20 students. Each class has a colored peg: Denton's fourth graders are green; Bryson's fourth graders are yellow; Jackie Hope's fifth graders are white and Bea Smith's fifth graders are red. Pegs on the colorful map on the wall of the gymnasium record the progress.

Christopher Bennett says that when the group reaches Asheville that the PE teacher plans to lead them in a folk dancing activity.

Antonio McClain says that when the group reaches Raleigh in Eastern North Carolina that will be about time for the big basketball tournaments and the groups will play basketball on campus.

Amber Poole said that when the group reaches the beach about May and near the end of school that a big beach party will be held on the campus. Denton explained that the children will be permitted to bring beach balls, sunglasses, and beach towels and will actually participate in a beach party to celebrate the end of their trip across the Tar Heel State.

"It isn't all play," reminds Stewart, who said the boys and girls must make record books, noting various geographic areas, cities, towns, parks, major lakes, highway numbers or other

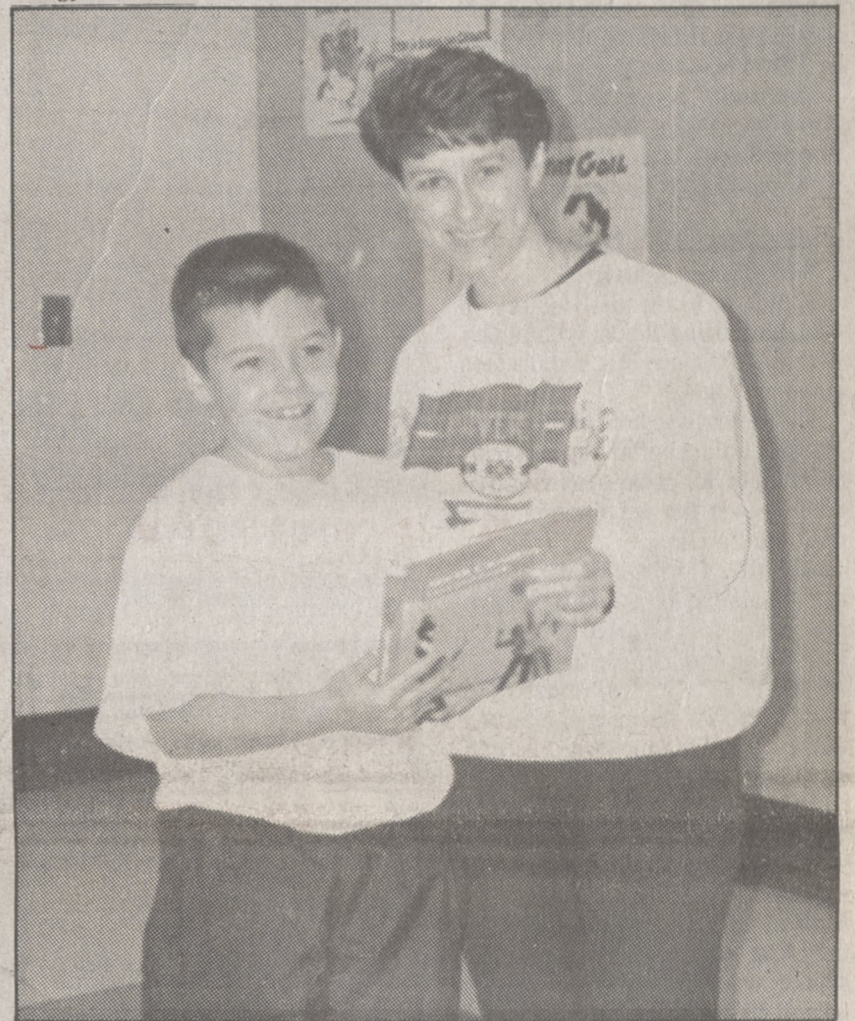
items of interest as they run across North Carolina. The books are expected to be put on display in local or school libraries.

Deaton assigns areas along the route for her Social Studies class to report. In the classroom they use an atlas, almanac, or general encyclopedia to find information on an assigned area and produce a creative book. In the gym they mark progress on a map. Each mile run in class is multiplied by the number of students in the group and that distance is marked by a student on the large map.

"North Carolina Land and People" is the title of the 4th grade Social Studies book. By year-end the students will complete both the book and their 500 mile journey across the Tar Heel State.

The class will be traveling from the foothills to the mountains and then back through the heartland and on to the coast, explained Stewart.

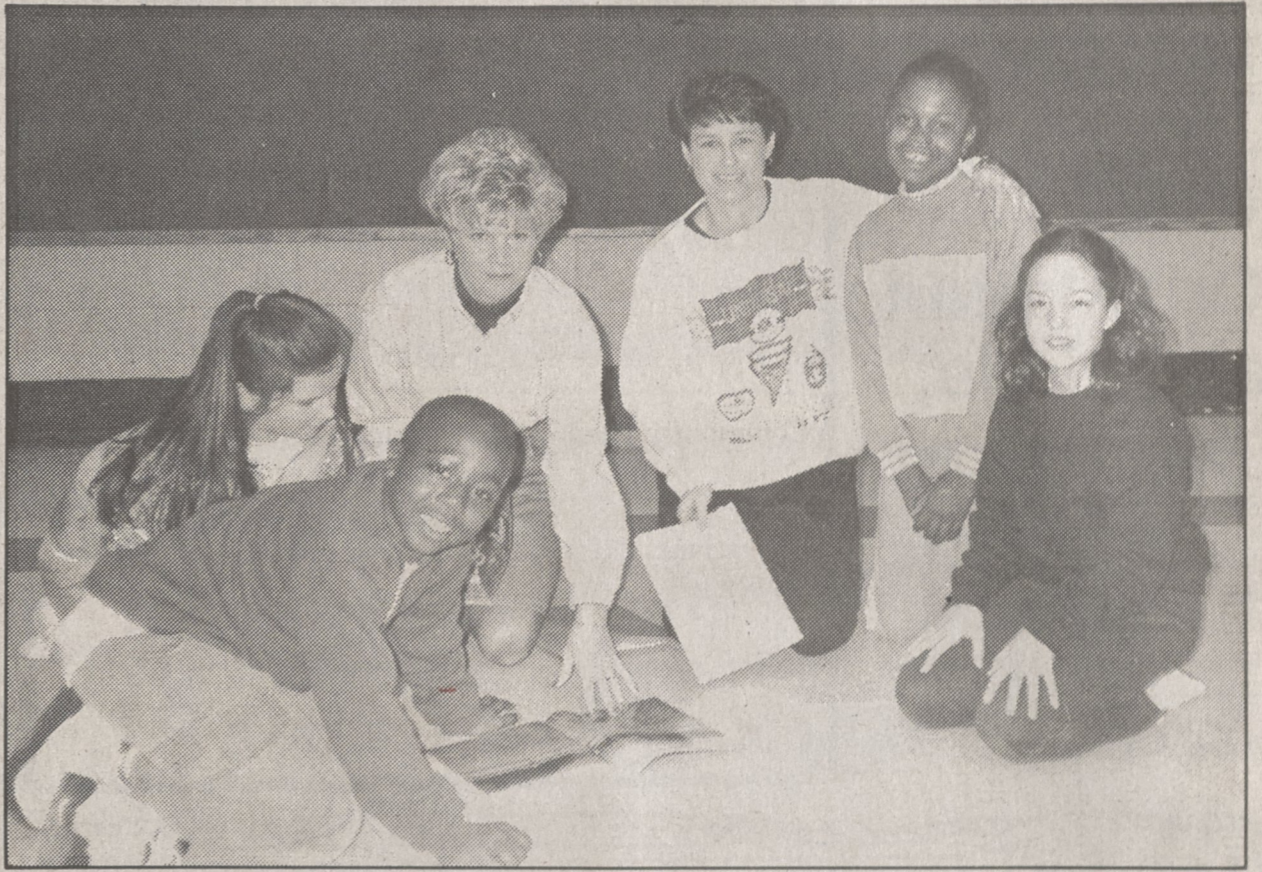
Deaton noted that the youngsters are excited about the upcoming study of the mountains where 43 mountain peaks reach 6,000 feet, including Mount Mitchell, highest peak in the Eastern United States. The breathtaking Great Smokies and Blue Ridge of the mighty Appalachian range also will spark their interest next week.



Christopher Bennett points to a chapter in his Social Studies book which coincides with the miles he has run with Lisa Stewart, PE teacher.



This jogging group is ready to run at West School. Front row, left to right, Lee Owensby, Diana Falls, Sarah Anderson, Leah Hall and Stephanie Rikard. Back row, Antonio McClain, Jodie Baity, Nina Gregory, Amber Poole and David Moschler.



Antonio McClain, Jodie Baity, teachers Susan Denton and Lisa Stewart, Nina Gregory and Amber Poole plan their schedule for an hour's running exercise in the West School gymnasium.

Teacher of the Month



DIANNA BRIDGES

Bridges hopes to touch young lives

Coaching girls' volleyball at Kings Mountain High School is one of the fun rewards of Dianna Bridges' job as a physical education teacher.

The Kings Mountain High School Teacher of the Month for February said that eight of her former students have won athletic scholarships and two of them--Regina Brown of Western Carolina University and Velma Degree of Elon College--have full scholarships.

Fourteen years ago when she graduated from Burns High School such scholarships were not available. Bridges was a star on the

Burns girls basketball team which was state runner-up her senior year.

Going to school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was a goal of Bridges, the daughter of James and Phyllis Sweezy of Kings Mountain. It was natural that their daughter would major in physical education because of her love of sports of all kinds.

Bridges has taught 10 years in Kings Mountain, eight years at KMHS and before that at Grover. Her husband, Wayne, is associated with his parents, Norma and Bobby Bridges in the family business, Bridges Textiles.

The school and community activities of their three sons keep her busy when she isn't in school. Jason, 10, Matthew, 9, and Brandon, 7, all attend Bethware School. The family is active in Beulah United Methodist Church and enjoy family recreation and sports of all kinds.

Dianna and her mother stay busy on weekends in their family shop called "Personally Yours" at the Sweezy home. They embroider logos and initials for local sporting goods businesses and also get calls for embroidering personal designs and initials on sweatshirts, hats, and other items. What began as a

hobby for the mother and daughter team may turn into a full time business at some point for Mrs. Sweezy.

Bridges enjoys teaching at the high school level. She hopes to make a difference in a child's life. She said that her former basketball coach, Melba Carpenter, formerly of Kings Mountain, was her inspiration and she followed in Carpenter's footsteps as a PE teacher.

"What we teach them will impact their young lives," said Bridges of her 150 students. Bridges says her students have impacted her life in a big way.

Bridges calls volleyball one of the best outlets for young women and says her volleyball teams are all academically strong as well.

She teaches five classes a day. One of the pleasures of her exercise and conditioning class is that spring-like weather finds the group walking up to three miles a day. She also encourages weight-lifting and cardiovascular exercises.

And, no, they don't walk around the school track for three miles. "This is a big campus and we just get out and walk it," said Bridges. "All of us have spring fever."