

## THIS WEEK'S PERSONALITY

# Joy Taylor visits Costa Rica

By JIM BREWER  
Times Editor

Two weeks ago, Joy Taylor, Loudonville High School math teacher, left her home in Wooster to spend a few weeks in Costa Rica on an educational mission.

In addition to her trip, Taylor has decided to leave the Loudonville-Perrysville Schools, accepting a teaching post at Wayne County Career Center in Smithville. She will continue to coach the Redbird girls basketball team.

The trip was the second to a Latin American country by Taylor, who two years ago spent several weeks in Chile as a member of a Rotary International group study team.

"That trip was more cultural in nature, while this one involves actual scientific research," said Taylor, who has taught at Loudonville High School for the past six years, in an interview before she left.

She said she found out about the trip to Costa Rica, part of a joint venture between Miami of Ohio University and Cincinnati Zoo called Project Dragonfly, through one of the five other people who went on that Rotary trip to Chile, all educators from northeastern and north central Ohio.

"This trip will have direct educational benefits for me as



Jim Brewer photo

**Joy Taylor**, math teacher and Loudonville High School varsity girls basketball coach, is in Costa Rica for a few weeks on an educational trip.

a teacher, as I will gain direct research-based experience, experience that I can carry back to the classroom," Taylor said.

Taylor and a group of about 20 people involved in teaching or other educational missions will explore the lowland rain forest, cloud forests and coastal regions of Costa Rica.

"Formally, we will be conducting field research of the biotic, physical and cultural forces that effect tropical bio-

diversity," Taylor said. "It is all about research, and part of the application process leading to my acceptance into the program was my preparation of a research paper. In the field, we will perform research and then, through collaboration with other educators, will come up with ways to relate our research experience with my students in the classroom."

The educators from America will join a group of Costa Rican teachers on the research

experience, and will continue it after they return home on Project Dragonfly's Web platform, which was created for educator collaboration.

The program will provide graduate credit to participants. Similar trips are under way or planned in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

Chris Myers, director of Project Dragonfly and a professor of zoology at Miami, said: "The project's mission is to build an alliance of educators with first-hand knowledge of inquiry-driven, community-based learning for the benefit of ecological communities, student achievement and global understanding. It is part of a step of going behind textbooks and engaging educators and students into the real world."

Taylor has taught math, primarily algebra and pre-algebra, at Loudonville High School. A native of Wooster, she earned undergraduate degrees in both math and English at Charleston Southern University in Charleston, S.C., and earned a master's in education at Muskingum College in New Concord.

A scholastic basketball star at Wooster High School, she played college basketball at Charleston Southern, and serves as the girls varsity head basketball coach at Loudonville High School.