

Not an average day at Canfield High School

By Kathleen Palumbo
Town Crier correspondent

Continuing her master's program studies, one Canfield High School teacher will be spending a portion of her summer in class so to speak. "We'll be sleeping under the stars



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and bathing in the Sea of Cortez," she said.

Patricia Roberts, who teaches environmental science and biology at the UNESCO program, through which she will spend two weeks of intense study in Baja as part of her master's program in biological sciences which she's obtaining through Miami University's Project Dragonfly, a collabora-

tive program between Miami University, and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens.

Sharing that she was looking for a program through which she could obtain her masters of arts for teachers, Roberts said she wanted a non-traditional program. "This was just an unbelievable fit," she said.

Having been selected to participate in global graduate studies that focus on studying desert and marine ecosystems on the Baja peninsula, Roberts is one of more than 350 U.S. and international educators and graduate students selected this year to travel with the program.

"It truly is field study," said Roberts. According to information obtained through the websites dragonflywork-

shops.org, and earthexpeditions.org, and provided by Connie Malone of Miami University, the Global Field Master's Program, uses Earth Expeditions courses as the foundation for a transformative master's degree program combining summer field experiences worldwide with collaborative projects via web learning activities, making it a master's degree program that can be completed part-time from anywhere.

"The program really stresses inquiry and community conservation," said Roberts.

Prior to the trip, Roberts said she has joined instructors and classmates in Project Dragonfly's collaborative web community and completed assignments in preparation for the expedi-

tion. Although she has not yet met her travel companions in person, the students have been in constant communication, according to Roberts. "We've been going full force since March," she said.

Departing on July 31 with the Baja V trip, Roberts will study at the UNESCO's World Heritage site, Bahía de Los Angeles

on the Sea of Cortez, in a biosphere reserve where a typical Earth Expeditions day is likely to include study at field conservation sites, lectures, student-led discussions of key course topics, engagement with local communities, open inquiries and journal writing.

The trip concludes Aug. 8, when Roberts, who lives in Salem with her husband

David and with whom she has two daughters, said she will continue to work within the web-based community from September through early December.

"There are so many things that amaze me about this program," said Roberts, who said she is already hoping to add Thailand, or Trinidad, asking in anticipation, "Isn't it exciting?"