

Wardzinski to run Boston Marathon

By LIZETTE LAMPE
For The News Herald

This spring, one of Western Piedmont Community College's most dynamic faculty members will compete in the most widely acclaimed and historical marathon in the world.

On April 20, Paul Wardzinski, WPCC instructor and coordinator of English, will run in the 102nd Boston Marathon, an event which only invites the top 10 percent of marathon runners in the country, and is host to participants from all over the world.

The 43-year-old Wardzinski qualified for the Boston Marathon just before Christmas at the Kiawah Island Marathon in South Carolina, an accredited marathon course.

He completed the 26.2 mile race in three hours and 14 minutes — six minutes under the three hours and 20 minutes time required for his age bracket to enter the Boston Marathon.

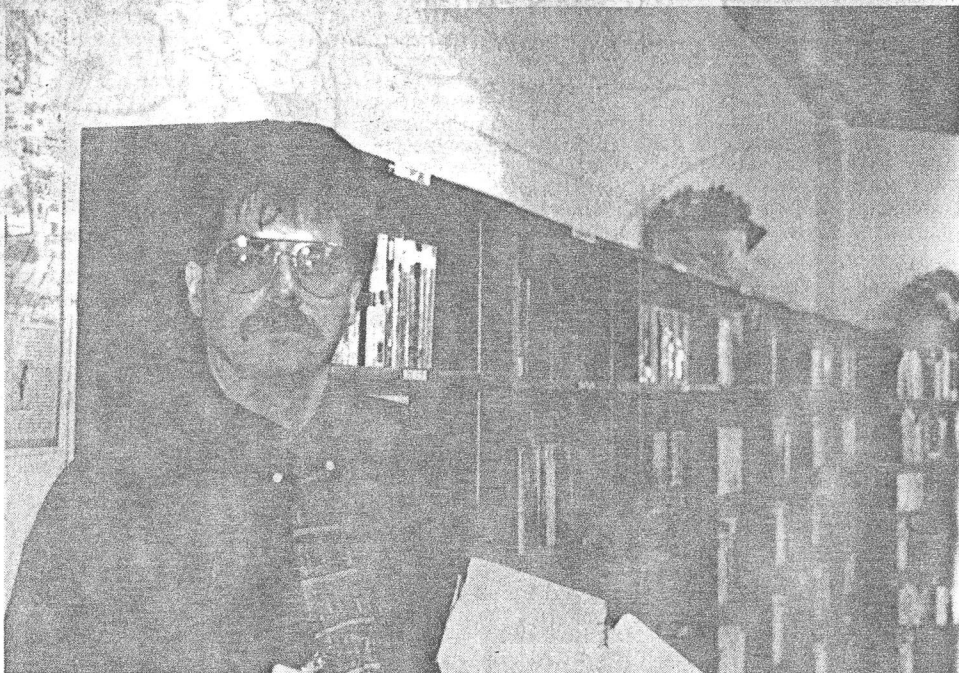
1998 marks Wardzinski's 15th year as a full-time faculty member at WPCC. He teaches composition, technical writing, literature, speech and orientation courses.

He earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Pennsylvania, a master's degree in American Literature at Colorado State University and an advanced Educational Degree (Ed.S - education specialty in adult education) at Western Carolina University.

Wardzinski is also proud to be a product of a community college; he earned an associate of arts degree from Montgomery County Community College in Pennsylvania to begin his college career.

Wardzinski's contributions to the college go well beyond teaching. He has coordinated WPCC's annual Fall Speakers Forum for a number of years, and still plays a key role in putting on the event.

In addition, he has energetically given of his time to "ABC's for Kid's" the annual Christmas charity in which WPCC faculty and staff



WPCC's Paul Wardzinski has qualified for the elite Boston Marathon.

participate.

In addition to his normal curriculum course load, he also teaches English classes at Foothills Correctional Institute three afternoons a week. "It has been one of my most rewarding experiences in teaching," he remarks. In February, Wardzinski will speak to a group of North Carolina educators on teaching strategies for the prison environment.

Branching out from teaching, Paul has run five marathons during the past two years: the Philadelphia Marathon, the Charlotte Observer Marathon (twice), the Grandfather Mountain Marathon and the Kiawah Island Marathon.

The Boston Marathon, representing the pinnacle for any marathon runner, will make his sixth. Paul

says, "You can't beat the tradition of running in the footsteps of this century's best runners."

Wardzinski further notes, "There has been a revival of running in the last seven years. From 1968 to 1975 was the first jogging craze, which was followed by a slump from 1975 to 1985. Now, the baby boomers are revisiting running as an activity sport."

As for marathon running, it took him three years to work up to the marathon level. "It can't be done without the support of family and friends," say Wardzinski, whose wife, Evelyn, who also runs, played the support role by driving him to and from races and putting up with long training runs.

According to Wardzinski, running is not a performance sport; it's

an endurance sport. In addition, he says it's good for stress reduction, weight reduction, muscle tone, cardiovascular health and self-esteem.

Although he says not everyone should run marathons (all marathons are 26.2 miles), Wardzinski views exercise, like education, as a necessary component in life.

"Anyone who leaves out physical exercise or continuing their education is leaving out very important ingredients to a healthy and productive life. It's a simple classic ideal which we inherited from the ancient Greeks - 'healthy body/healthy mind'," he remarks.

(Lizette Lampe is the director of public relations for Western Piedmont Community College.)