

Patricia Jassmann, Living a Life of Language

Laurel Molloy, staff writer

Patricia Jassmann, adjunct assistant professor of German, sat outside the north entrance of PVCC. She wore pink pants and a rich-purple shirt covered by a silver blazer that looked almost like reflected snow or metal. As Jassmann talked, gesturing, and taking occasional sips of water, black birds chirped and swam through the air. She discussed many different subjects from social issues, to the importance of language and believing in yourself.

Jassmann has been teaching for a long time. She has taught German and English as a second language. Before she started at PVCC, she lived and worked in Germany. Her longest stay was seven years. The love she has for the place and language was clear as she sat recalling her time there. She lived in Kiel, the capital of Schleswig-Holstein, for a while. Schleswig-Holstein is the northernmost state of Germany's 16 states. Jassmann said around 3 p.m. in the winter it would get dark, and by 2 a.m. in the summer, "the sun off in the distance [would] just start to shine."

The light slowly sank across PVCC, the glow on the grass receding, as Jassmann mentioned the importance of language and history. She said, "We really need to learn more languages." She went on to say that languages are gateways into other countries and cultures. As Americans, we are not just influenced by ourselves, so many places and people affect us. She said traveling, learning languages, and culture help everyone appreciate our own country and others. Jassmann talked about how it is crucial to understand the world and where we all come from, saying, "We don't live in just this country. We live in this country but are affected by so much that is going on in other countries." She also added that it is important for everyone to examine history including the mistakes and triumphs made in the past so we can all learn from them.

Many people find learning languages hard, and it does take a lot of work. But Jassmann said when she teaches German it is not as much memorization as people first think. She said there



**Patricia Jassmann poses outside of PVCC.
Photography by Laurel Molloy**

are various tricks and patterns you can learn and follow. Parts of German still need to be memorized, but these tricks help people learn and understand the language better.

When asked for a closing remark about something she wished to tell students, Jassmann said, "You have to believe in yourself." She said that it is not enough for teachers to believe in students. Students must believe in themselves and put in the time and work to accomplish their dreams. Just like she believes the sun will come up in the morning, Jassmann said she starts out believing every student can accomplish what they want. But she said in the end, it is the students who must believe in themselves and do the work to succeed at whatever they want.