

Youth

Theater group offers teens preparation for future goals

By Rob Cullivan

Peace, flowers and love mean a lot to Rick Staropoli.

The McQuaid Jesuit High School sophomore toured the Soviet Union this past summer as a member of a Peace Child Chorus group. He currently performs with the Flower City Players, a teenage theater company sponsored by the Rochester City Department of Parks, Recreation and Human Services.

Both activities have allowed Staropoli to indulge in his greatest love — acting.

Staropoli and his sister, Christine, a freshman at Nazareth Academy, are among 11 Flower City Players who performed last Friday evening, Oct. 7, at the Stardust Ballroom in the Edgerton Recreation Center. The troupe staged scenes from popular musicals such as *Grease*, *Bye Bye Birdie* and *I Ought To Be In Pictures*.

Flower City director Nancy Johns Price wants to train her members to go into professional theater by having them act in a variety of dramatic and comedic roles. "We just do scenes," she said, noting that the troupe doesn't perform full-length plays.

Several of the group's members consider the acting experience an important prelude to their future plans, whether or not those plans focus on acting.

Rick Staropoli met Price a year and a half ago when she directed him in the play, *The Kimchi Kid*, at the recreation center. Price asked Staropoli to join the Flower City Play-

ers. Six months later, his sister, Christine, successfully auditioned for the group.

Another diocesan high school student, Donna Stefano, wants to use her experience with the Flower City Players to enter community theater. The Nazareth Academy senior has long dreamed of being on stage. "I've always liked acting," she said. "I first started in eighth grade. I tried it and saw that I enjoyed it." Stefano plans to enter an acting competition at Geneseo State College in April.

April showers have been known to bring flowers, but one Flower City Player plans to bring news of showers and other meteorological phenomena to TV viewers in the future. Jason Carr, a freshman at Brockport State College, and a graduate of Aquinas High School, joined the Flower City Players as a stage manager two years ago, and has since acted in its productions.

A meteorology major, Carr wants to use his theatrical training to prepare for a career as a television weatherman. "Being in front of people will take a lot of nervousness away from being in front of the camera," Carr said.

Finding more male actors would ease Price's nerves. At present, the troupe includes seven girls. Price noted that the group's limited rehearsal time shouldn't tax an interested student's schedule. Flower City Players rehearse on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and perform a new show every two months.

Interested students can contact her at (716)428-6769, after 3 p.m. on weekdays.



Linda Dow Hayes/Courier-Journal
Members of the Flower City Players are Adinah Frazier, Tara Houndt, Heather Dowling, Tracy Miller, Jason Carr, Tom Boyle, Rick Staropoli, Christine Staropoli, Leslie Bernfeld, Jason Edwards and Donna Stefano.

Bishop Kearney High School Do you think school walk-outs are an effective way to protest?

STEPHANIE KRUPNICK, junior:

I believe that sometimes these measures are necessary to get any results. By merely confronting the faculty, the problem is easily pushed aside. Sometimes, more drastic measures are necessary to solve the problem. As long as the walkouts remain non-violent, they could be the only effective solution.



JAMES ENGLERTH, senior:

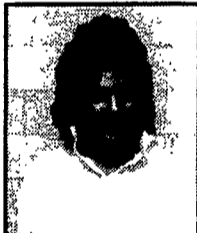
An effective way to protest discontent with a school situation is to seek a closed session with the administration. A petition should be formed, and selected students should represent the feelings of the majority.



As Teens See It

LISA TELLIER, freshman:

Walking out of class would get you recognized and get your point across, but I feel that the more maturely you act about a situation, the more adults will be willing to listen. I think walking out makes you look like the bad guys because, some people view it as rude and disrespectful. If you talk in the right tone of voice and with maturity, people will be more willing to be on your side and try to help.



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MUSIC TRIVIA

This week's question:
Name the Chubby Checker record which reached number one in two different years (1960 & 1962).

Rules:
Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn. If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave. All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

The Courier-Journal Music Trivia
1150 Buffalo Rd.
Rochester, N.Y. 14624

Coming of Age

By Robert Doolittle
NC News Service

The Church makes enormous claims about the Eucharist. But are they valid? Is Jesus really there, alive and speaking and helping?

Most teens listen respectfully to these claims, but continue to find the Mass a barely tolerable experience of the same old words and actions week after week.

This gap between lofty claims and actual experience began to bother Melissa during her freshman year. One of her gifts is to be candid and feisty in situations in which most teens would hold back. So one evening she marched right up to this very frustrating "mystery of the Eucharist" and let go with her gift of honesty.

Here's what happened.

The youth group was on retreat, and we were in the midst of a prayer and healing service in the chapel. A consecrated host was exposed to view up on the altar, and people were free to move around and pray with one another in the chapel.

Melissa chose to sit on the floor part way up the aisle and stare at the little round object on the altar. She later told us her prayer.

"Lord, is that really you? I'd like to believe it, but I don't. It's just too strange to think you're up there in that little white thing. I feel left out of something, but what can I do? I can't just believe what I don't believe"

And then she wept, tears of anger and sadness.

Suddenly, a wave of peace rushed over her,

coming, she felt from the host at the altar. Her doubts were swept from her and her tears were changed. Now she wept from relief and happiness at her discovery.

"He convinced me," she reported. "The Eucharist is really him!"

Melissa's breakthrough — special as it was to her — is by no means unique. Many adult Catholics meet Jesus in the Eucharist. Maybe even the great majority talk to him and listen to him and get close to him.

And they come away from Mass changed inside, maybe freed up, maybe calmed down, maybe strengthened, maybe straightened out.

Some of you reading this wonder if I'm right — if it's possible some adults you know also feel they come into real contact with Jesus at Mass. Why have you never heard anything about it? Adults may speak of "real presence" as a doctrine, but say nothing about an actual encounter.

We're dealing here with a strange contradiction among American Catholics. The real presence of Christ is both our proudest tradition and our best kept secret. A kind of deep shyness prevails among most adult Catholics.

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we "know him in the breaking of the bread" But we won't openly admit it, even to those we love most.

I offer a simple piece of advice. Get brave, like my friend Melissa. Go first to the parents, youth leaders, priests and teachers who press you to get to Mass each week, and ask them to open up their experience to you.

Be gentle. You will startle them and challenge them with your questions — as younger children do when they ask about "the facts of life." But be persistent. It will be good for them to break out of their habit of silence on this subject.

And it will be good for you to hear — not that you will believe suddenly just on the basis of their witness. But rather you will now have the support you need to take the big step.

THE BATTERY

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