

'Nazkateers' upbeat act features Disney melodies

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — When future opponents of Amy Karch are seeking to disarm her in court, they'll have to merely turn on the nearest radio and let the music take effect.

"I want to be a lawyer," the Nazareth Academy freshman said about her potential career. "But whenever there's music on, I start dancing."

Karch had plenty of opportunity to exercise her instincts at the Rochester Gas & Electric Corporation's annual "Care-Avan" on Wednesday, Sept. 20, at the Mapledale Party House. The company hosts the event to honor its retired employees, 500 of whom turned out to hear the Nazareth Show Choir perform. The show featured a noontime medley of musical numbers culled from various Walt Disney movies.

Karch and 15 other students sang and danced their way through such songs as "Zip-a-dee-doo-dah" and "Whistle While

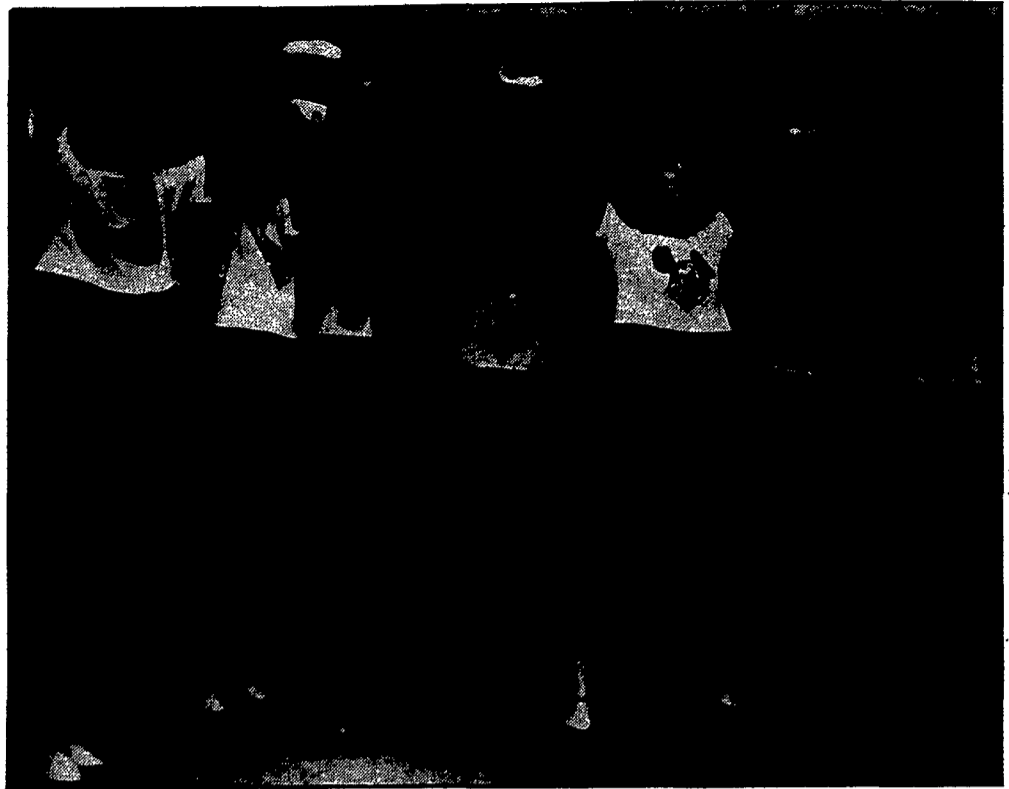
You Work." Ami Salzman, the choir's choreographer, noted that the group had performed the medley at the annual Festival of the Lilac in Highland Park last spring, resulting in the utility company's invitation to perform at the Mapledale.

"Disney gets a really good reception from a lot of people," Salzman said. "They're kind of easy tunes. It makes them feel warm."

Seniors in the audience may have found it easy to hum along with the girls, but the students' flawless performance masked their pre-performance jitters. The choir has six new members this fall, Salzman noted, and the novices had to learn the songs and steps in just three rehearsals.

"I wasn't really scared until I got here," sophomore Jo Ann Castaldo said, noting that some members of the audience got up and left just as the girls got on stage. Nonetheless, Castaldo behaved like a trouper. "When I first got out and started singing, I wasn't nervous," she said.

Junior Bridget Foran was confident that



Linda Dow Hayes/Catholic Courier

Bridget Foran (center) plays Pinocchio as other members of the Nazareth Academy Show Choir pull her imaginary strings.

the audience would enjoy the choir's choreography. "I think it fit in with the music very well," she said. "I think in 'Whistle While You Work' ... it was very interpretive."

Foran said the group's success stems from its unity. "It's like this big family unit that's up there together," she said.

Karch commented that as the choir's first and only freshman, she has never experienced a cold shoulder. This year marked the first time that the choir auditioned freshmen, and Karch was lucky enough to get a spot.

"(The girls) are really nice," she said, noting that no one teased her about being a freshman. Such taunting might be expected because the show choir is Nazareth's elite musical group. Auditions focus on a student's dancing and singing ability, commented musical director Michael Klesch.

The show choir draws its membership from the school's Perosian Choir, a 40-member singing group that performs traditional songs and hymns, said Jean Zannie-Mumford, school spokeswoman. Nazareth also boasts a gospel choir.

Karch decided to try out for the show choir because she is an 11-year veteran of the Donna F. Smith School of Dance in Webster. "I'm interested in today's kind of

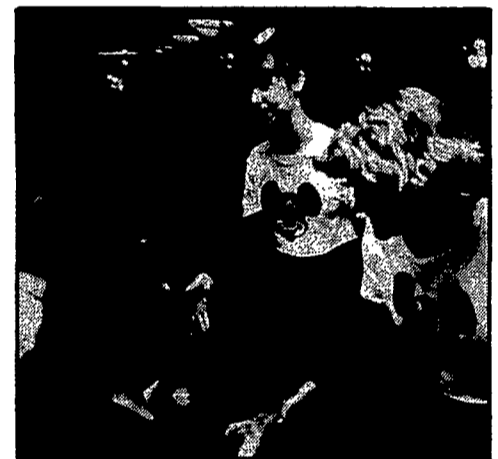
music," she said, adding, "I'll probably be dancing for the rest of my life."

Foran, who was a member of the show choir last year, enjoys the group's emphasis on upbeat numbers. "I really liked the fact that they did a lot of show tunes," she said. "I've always been interested in Broadway shows."

A more practical motive keeps her coming to the group's weekly practices. "We're all up there together," she said. "Plus it gives me high school credit."



Courtney Malone, Keesha Fleth and Brittany Gray (left to right) sing one of many Disney tunes that entertained seniors at the Mapledale Party House.



Courtney Malone (center) and Kristen MacPherson (right) enjoy greeting the audience.

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