

Traditions spur memories that last a lifetime

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

Mary Valeant, student council president at Elmira Notre Dame High School, said her class picked the song *This is the Time* by Billy Joel as its homecoming theme because of its lyrics:

This is the time to remember, because it will not last forever; this is the time to hold on to, because we won't although we'll want to; this is the time, but time is going to change...

The song points out that high school days won't last forever — that things will change and eventually Valeant and her fellow seniors will return to Notre Dame as alumni.

Homecoming means a return to a familiar place, such as when alumni return to their former schools. But over the years, homecoming weekends have evolved into social events that include undergraduates as well.

Almost every school that has a football team has a homecoming celebration, and

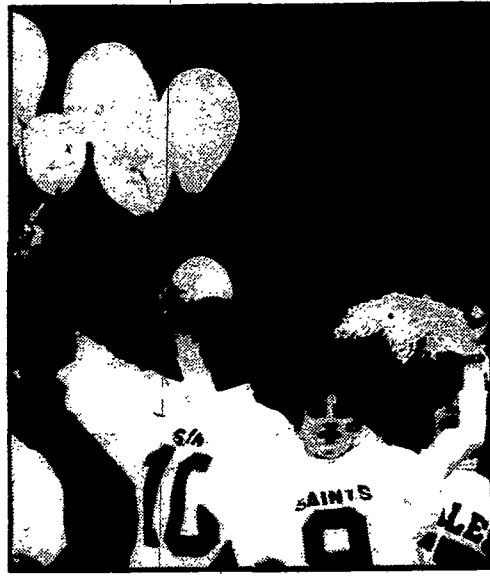


Shayne Cooke (right) applies 'war paint' to Bob McFadden's face, as the two seniors get psyched up for their last homecoming as undergraduates.

the festivities usually revolve around a homecoming game. Valeant noted that homecoming has been a Notre Dame tradition ever since the Crusaders began playing football in 1959.

Most homecomings are planned and organized by the schools' student councils, which raise money throughout the year to pay for the weekends' activities. Although alumni are invited to attend a variety of activities, most former students attend only the football game, council members noted.

Notre Dame's celebration, which took place Sept. 28-29, began with the dec-



Tim Hansen
Members of the sophomore class at DeSales rally in anticipation of winning this year's float contest.

orating of the school on Thursday night. On Friday before the game, a pep rally — with all varsity athletes on hand — took place during the last period of school.

A pep rally is also part of the homecoming traditions at Geneva DeSales (Oct. 12-13), Bishop Kearney (Oct. 5-6) and Aquinas Institute (Oct. 26-27). AQ students will host a bonfire complete with cheerleaders, a tug-of-war, music and food on the Friday night of their celebration.

The week before homecoming is "Spirit Week" at both Bishop Kearney and Aquinas. Members of Aquinas' student council — Tammy Korol (president), Aaron Boucher (vice president) and Ann-Marie Feeley (secretary) — said their week includes "backwards day," when students wear their clothes backwards; "crazy hat day," when students wear funny hats to school; and "color day" on which each class wears a different color.

"A big part of 'Spirit Week' is reaching out and helping the community," said Brian Buff, director of recruitment and special events at Aquinas. In an effort to help others, the student council has established an Aquinas tradition called "jug wars" in which students raise money for charity.

Each class is given a jar to fill with pennies, with each penny representing one point. Classes are penalized if their jars contain paper money or change other than pennies. If, for example, a senior managed to sneak a dollar bill into the juniors' jar, the ploy would set the juniors back 100 points. Thus by the end of the week, students noted, all four jars are overflowing with bills and silver coins.

At Bishop Kearney, students can be seen wearing wild hats, ties and socks during

Spirit Week, according to Student Council President Matthew Cox and Secretary Rosalie Ortiz. The annual celebration also includes nationality day, sweatshirt day and school-color day, and students paint school colors on their faces on the last day of the week.

Over in Geneva, a tradition was started this year at DeSales when Father Albert Shamon celebrated the school's first Homecoming Mass on Oct. 13. The Mass was followed by a student dance and a reception for alumni.

The Saturday night dance is a homecoming tradition that gives kings and queens a chance to reign.

Yet some diocesan schools — especially those without football programs — have created other traditions instead of homecoming. The annual "Day of Insanity" has been an institution at Our Lady of Mercy since the all-girls school was founded in 1928. Considered a day of "sheer Mercy madness" by the students, "Day of Insanity" always falls on one of the first Fridays of the school year.

"It's a Mercy tradition to open the



D.J. Cass (left) and Josh Kiley hammer the last few nails into the freshmen's float.

school year with a party day to celebrate school life and the expected academic achievements of the upcoming year," said Joan Hildebrand, director of enrollment at the Blossom Road school.

This year's celebration took place on Sept. 28, featuring several competitions between faculty and students. The day began with a lip synch contest and a senior car parade, followed by a soccer game, dodge ball and a tug-of-war.

Then each class tried to out-shout the other in a cheerleading contest complete with original cheers.

After the cheering, four class teams and one faculty team — identified by different color shirts — competed in class contests, including hula-hooping faculty and bubble-blowing juniors.

Mercy alumnae are welcome to attend the "Day of Insanity," as well as any event at Mercy, Hildebrand said.

At Nazareth Academy, a five-year reunion — including a homecoming banquet on Friday as well as a Sunday Mass and communion breakfast — is held for alumnae each May. According to Sister Ann Collins, SSI, school principal, Nazareth also has a "home for the holidays" celebration to give recent graduates a chance to get together for a casual dinner during Christmas week.

Although McQuaid Jesuit has a football team, school officials do not schedule a formal homecoming weekend, according to Assistant Vice Principal Joe Marchese. But McQuaid alumni frequently return to their alma mater to attend football games throughout the season, Marchese noted.

Football is an important element of most homecoming weekends, but it's definitely not the only source of fun, students noted. Homecoming is a chance for undergraduates and alumni to enjoy the spirit of their high school days.

"Our football team lost the homecoming game, but the weekend was still a great success," Valeant said. "As an alumnus next year, I'll definitely be coming back."

Catholic high schools plan upcoming open houses

ROCHESTER — The following diocesan high schools in the Rochester-area have scheduled open houses for October and November: Bishop Kearney High School, 125 Kings Highway S., on Oct. 23, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Aquinas Institute, 1127 Dewey Ave., on Oct. 25,

from 6:30-9 p.m.; McQuaid Jesuit High School, 1800 Clinton Ave. S., on Nov. 4, from 6-8 p.m.; Our Lady of Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Road, on Nov. 5, from 7-9 p.m.; and Nazareth Academy, 1001 Lake Ave., on Nov. 8, from 7-9 p.m.

Program on alcoholism set for DeSales High School

GENEVA — A program designed to help parents understand and learn what to do about the problem of teenage alcoholism will take place in the Sam Williams Library at DeSales High School, 90 Pulteney St., on Thursday, Oct. 25, from 7-9 p.m.

Entitled "Talking With Your Kids

About Alcohol," the program will be presented by the Ontario Council on Alcoholism and sponsored by the DeSales Parents Support Group.

Although the program is open to the public, it is intended for parents only. Call 315/789-5111 for information.

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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.

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