

Hornell teenager prepares for life in the Navy

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

HORNELL — If Jessica Fahl shows the same dedication in the U.S. Navy that she does at her church, then it shouldn't be long before she's a high-ranking officer.

The 18-year-old Fahl, who graduated from Hornell High School last month, has been a vital part of St. Ignatius Loyola Church over the last several years. Her duties have included lay reading, working at the parish festival, and serving as hostess when Father Jeremiah Moynihan, pastor at St. Ignatius Loyola, welcomes visiting priests.

"I'm not involved in any particular group, but Father Moynihan calls me for help a lot. I might fight with him, but I always do it," she said jokingly.

Father Moynihan portrayed Fahl as a "very pleasant girl who does whatever she's asked. She has a delightful sense of humor," he said.

Fahl's parents, James and Deborah, are equally active at the Hornell parish. "They're on a lot of committees," said Fahl, who also has a 14-year-old brother, Brian.

Beginning in mid-September, Fahl will begin serving a different organization when she travels to Orlando, Fla., to begin her four-year commitment to the U.S. Navy. She'll go through basic training for eight to 10 weeks, and then move on to Illinois to begin schooling toward a career in physical therapy.

Fahl had originally considered enlisting in the U.S. Air Force, but chose the Navy, she said, because "they will guarantee a job whereas the Air Force can't."

Her athletic background should make Fahl well equipped to handle basic training's rigors. She was a multi-sport star at Hornell High, earning All-Sullivan Trail Conference honors in soccer and softball and being named team Most Valuable Player in swimming.

Money, along with motivation, played into Fahl's decision to join the armed forces instead of entering college.

"One reason is that I'm not ready financially for college. I also don't want to sit in school right now; I'm tired of school," admitted Fahl, who is an 85-average student. "Even the Navy is



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Jessica Fahl, who plans to join the U.S. Navy this fall, is an attendant for the Summer Recreation Program at Hornell's James Street Park.

a big step because there, I can't sit around and say I'll wait until next year. It'll keep me going and give me some responsibility.

"I'm basically active, but now everything I've been active with (in high school) is over," she added.

Fighting in a war is a possibility Fahl has considered as well.

"I'll be there 100 percent," she declared. "My grandparents fought for my freedom, and I have to fight for it as well."

Reflecting upon last year's Operation Desert Storm, Fahl said, "In some

aspects it hit me real hard because I knew people who were over there. But I've got to do what I've got to do."

Fahl knows that she also may face entirely different type of challenges upon joining the Navy: she is a woman attempting to fit into a male-dominated environment.

That particular issue is in the forefront these days since several women in the armed forces — including at least one in the U.S. Navy — have come forward with recent allegations of sexual harassment.

Fahl anticipates that she'll be up to enduring occasional verbal harassment from her male superiors and counterparts, but that's where she'll draw the line.

"I don't think of sexual harassment as something that's said," Fahl commented. "Some of my friends say things that are crude. But if someone is forcing themselves on somebody else, and that person says 'no' but (the first person) doesn't stop, then it's like rape and that's where I majorly have a problem."

"I'm not going to say I want to be treated special because I'm a girl. Hopefully I'll be treated the same, but I know it's not going to be easy."

Fahl admitted to getting mixed responses from her friends about her career choice.

"Some of them said, 'You can't do that.' Others said, 'I really respect you; I could never do it,'" Fahl said.

And with Fahl's career plans taking her away from Hornell, how will Father Moynihan ever fill the void she leaves behind at St. Ignatius Loyola?

"He'll have to call my brother," Fahl remarked.

Exchange group seeks host families for students

ROCHESTER — Five exchange students from Germany are in need of Rochester-area host families for the 1992-93 school year.

These teenagers are being placed through the EUROVACANCES Youth Exchange, Inc., a non-profit organization. Hosts provide living quarters and meals for the students, who have their own spending money and full insurance coverage.

Interested families may contact Margaret Johnson at 716/392-8941, or write to her at Box 715, Brockport, N.Y., 14420.

ASPECT needs sponsors

ASPECT Foundation is looking for sponsors to host students from other countries.

ASPECT is a non-profit educational organization bringing teenagers from 21 countries to the United States for anywhere from five to 10 months.

For information, contact Rochester-area representative Judie Matsik at 716/271-0278.

YOUTH BRIEFS



DeSales High set to host dinner for retiring worker

GENEVA — A retirement celebration is planned for Sunday, Aug. 2, honoring Virginia D'Agostino for more than 30 years of service to DeSales High School.

D'Agostino will be recognized during the 11:15 a.m. Mass at St. Stephen's Church, 48 Pulteney St. Dinner will follow at 1 p.m. at Club 86, Avenue E.

Dinner tickets are \$13 and can be purchased through July 27 by contacting Doreen Hovey at 315/781-0245 or Barbara Rose at 789-6228.

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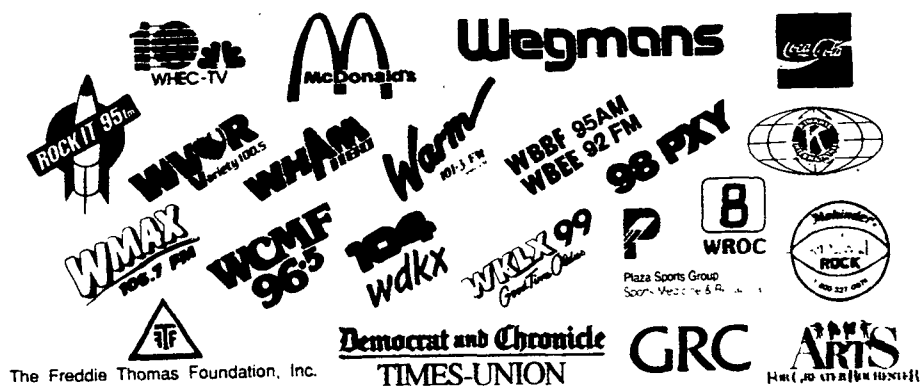
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