

May Queen ritual June 28 at Mercy

BRIGHTON — Our Lady of Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Road, will host its May Queen and Her Court ceremony on Friday, May 28. This 65th annual event will begin in the school auditorium at 8:30 a.m.

Senior Sherylanne Diodato has been selected as this year's May Queen. She and her "court," wearing white dresses and gloves and carrying spring flowers, will conclude the ceremony by proceeding outside to the school's grotto, where Diodato will crown the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary with a wreath of flowers.

Members of Diodato's court are: senior honor attendants — Sarah Bertucci, Catherine Botelho, Danielle Falco and Corinne Williams; senior attendants — Kirstie Marcello, Valerie DiProsa, Sara Dentino, Colleen Kubiak, Schattakka Gray and Yukiko Nakano; junior honor attendants — Danyl Gaiter and Dawn Lewandowski; and junior attendants — Esca Stumpf, Martha Speranza, Jennifer Agustin and Mary Spelman.

Volunteer gets award

PITTSFORD — Jennifer Hill, a junior at St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Ave., has been named the college's 1993 recipient of the fourth annual Ann B. and Martin F. Birmingham Student Volunteer Recognition Award.

Hill, a gerontology major, was recognized for her numerous college and community volunteer efforts. She will receive \$3,500 in scholarship aid and \$500 in cash.

The Fairport native is president of Circle K and has participated in several of that club's activities: the Homeless Sleep-Out; the Even Start Migrant Literacy Project; and various fund-raising efforts.

In addition, Hill volunteers at Isaiah House, a home for the dying in Rochester. She also serves as a member of the Big Brother/Big Sister program and dances in the college's annual 24-hour dance marathon for Camp Good Days and Special Times.

Remedial course offered

ROCHESTER — Nazareth Academy, 1001 Lake Ave., is offering a three-week summer remedial program for students in grades 1-8.

Sessions will be conducted from July 5-23 by the Sisters of St. Joseph. The tutorial program will feature individualized instruction in mathematics, reading and language arts.

Registration has been scheduled at Nazareth on Wednesday, June 16, from 4-8 p.m.

For details on this program, call the school office at 716/458-8583 before 4 p.m. or Sister Francesca Tundo, SSJ, at 621-1714 after 4 p.m.

Postcards requested

HORNELL — The fifth-grade class at St. Ann School is requesting donations of picture postcards from around the United States.

These items will be used as part of an ongoing class project. Postcards may be sent to: The Fifth Grade, St. Ann School, 27 Erie Ave., Hornell, N.Y., 14843.

Students carry on festive tradition

Nazareth girls are keen on 'Lila' role

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — How did nice girls like these wind up in a costume like this?

For 51 weeks out of the year, Margaret and Sarah Grabowski lead perfectly normal existences. Margaret, 16, is a junior at Nazareth Academy, 1001 Lake Ave., where she plays two sports and is a member of her high school's dance company.

Nineteen-year-old Sarah, meanwhile, has just completed her freshman year at Nazareth College of Rochester, 4245 East Ave., Pittsford, where she is majoring in English.

At Lilac Festival time, however, this sister act becomes a real stinker.

Margaret and Sarah take turns serving as Lila the Skunk, the festival's official mascot. This unusual tradition has been held exclusively by Nazareth Academy students since the late 1980s.

As Margaret Grabowski prepared to ride in her first-ever Lilac Festival Parade through Highland Park last Saturday, May 15, she put on a typical Lila performance. A little girl approached her cautiously, but walked away beaming after receiving a pat on the head from Lila. Then some adults stepped forth to have their picture taken with the lilac-colored mascot, who gives hugs and handshakes but does not speak.

"A lot of people come up and say, 'You could never pay me to do this,'" said Margaret, who first served as Lila last year when she substituted for her older sister.

Yet she finds the job quite rewarding because "you get to meet people. It makes you feel great when you can make people to smile."

"It's well worth it. You can tell that people are really delighted," added Sarah Grabowski, who is in her fourth year of playing Lila.

Sarah also got her start as a substitute when, as a Nazareth Academy sophomore, she filled in for two juniors.

"When I got there I was really nervous," Sarah recalled about her first experience as Lila. "I had never even been to Highland Park before."

Sarah is seeing plenty of duty this week, she said, because her sister is currently busy with softball.

Lila's job of being a goodwill ambassador isn't as simple as it sounds. As temperatures rise, the challenge of keeping cool — and friendly — while encumbered by a heavy costume becomes immense.

"It gets terrible. When it gets real hot, you can't stay in (the costume). I have ice packs on my shoulders," said Margaret Grabowski.

A humorous problem endured by Lila is one of mistaken identity, her portrayals acknowledged.

"A lot of people think we're a squirrel or a chipmunk," remarked Mar-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Above left, Margaret Grabowski and Laura Tallants (right) wave to a young onlooker during the Lilac Festival Parade May 15. At left, 'Lila' gives a hug after the parade.



garet Grabowski.

"Or a bear," said 17-year-old Laura Tallants, a Nazareth Academy sophomore who also portrays Lila.

Sarah Grabowski is at a loss to figure out some of these interpretations.

"A bear? I mean, come on," she commented. "I can see if they thought I was a squirrel or a mouse, but a bear?"

Lila also has to face the challenge of young children with inquiring minds.

"A lot of them pull our tail," said Margaret Grabowski.

"Some kids are trying to find out who's in there. They start yelling, 'There's a person in there,' and I say to myself, 'Somebody get this kid out of here,'" Sarah Grabowski laughed.

Mercy, McQuaid acting students capture four awards at competition

GENESEO — Students from Our Lady of Mercy and McQuaid Jesuit high schools combined to win four top awards at the Western New York Theatre Festival on Friday, April 30. The competition took place at SUNY College at Geneseo.

Known as the Mercy/McQuaid Players, this acting troupe captured one first place and three second places.

The first-place winner was Ralph DiTucci, a senior at McQuaid Jesuit, 1800 Clinton Ave. S. DiTucci won as Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of Batty Koda in the Mercy-McQuaid Players' production of *FernGully*.

In addition, DiTucci walked away with second-place honors in the Best Actor in a Musical division for his role as Tony in *West Side Story*.

Danielle Falco, a senior at Our Lady of Mercy, 1437 Blossom Road, was awarded second place in the Best Actress in a Musical category for her work as Maria in *West Side Story*.

In addition, the Mercy/McQuaid players, under the direction of Mercy theater arts instructor Bob Smyth, gained second place for Best Production in a Musical with *West Side Story*.