

# Armchair College Fair

## Shy on cash? Community can help

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

Struggling to find a few extra thousand dollars to attend the college of your dreams?

A little creativity may be all it takes to put you over the top.

For instance, were you aware that the Catholic Daughters of America and the Knights of Columbus offer scholarships for college students? Or that your very own parish — St. Patrick's Church in Savannah is one example — might offer college scholarship money?

Perhaps you've taken a part-time job to help offset college expenses. Did you know that your own place of employment might have scholarship money available as well?

For those candidates willing to do their homework, scholarships can be found in literally hundreds of places, observed Margie McNamara.

"Check with the churches, your dad's place of business — especially a place where there's a union," suggested McNamara, college counselor in the guidance department at Our Lady of Mercy High School, Brighton. "Fraternal organizations and towns also offer scholarships."

McNamara noted that scholarship money is also offered by ethnic organizations and groups advocating for people with medical conditions or disabilities. One such organization is the Easter Seal Society.

Mercy circulates a booklet called "The Scoop," which lists a wide range of scholarships available in the Rochester area. The guide reveals that college money



is offered by such well-known corporations as Coca-Cola, Wegmans and Tops, and civic groups including the Rotary and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Ethnic-related scholarships are available through the Korean Society, Sons of Italy and Polish People's Home. Winners of an Irish History Contest are also awarded scholarships.

Cash awards range from \$30 to full scholarships. Qualifying criteria do vary: Some scholarships are open to all high-school students, while others hinge on a number of requirements. For example, in order to be eligible for a \$2,000 Fairport Rotary Club scholarship, you must plan to enter a service-related career and also be a resident of the towns of Fairport or Perinton.

To improve their chances of receiving such monies, McNamara suggested that high-school students develop "scholarship portfolios." These portfolios should reflect records of awards, volunteer duty and other extracurricular achievements.

Regardless of which avenues are taken for financial assistance,

McNamara urged high-school students to begin their search as early as possible. She explained that many scholarships have application deadlines, so it's wise to start searching by your junior — or even your sophomore — year.

Because many of these scholarships are not widely advertised, McNamara said that it's important for students and their families to combine forces to do the necessary digging.

"It really is a task that has to be undertaken by the parents," McNamara said. "If they, and the student, are willing to put in all the work required, they may find something."

McNamara warned that families won't necessarily see their efforts rewarded with sizable scholarships. She remarked that a family could search for several months and only turn up a scholarship worth a few hundred dollars — or no scholarship at all. For that reason, she said, students should begin their financial-aid search by completing government financial-aid forms and inquiring at colleges about their own financial-aid availability.

Another risky move, McNamara added, is the use of scholarship locator services. For a fee of up to \$150, she said, families often wind up with nothing more than a list containing scholarship information they could have obtained through a guidance office or over the Internet.

### Dance marathon slated for Fisher

Students at St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Ave., Pittsford, will dance in the college gym from 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28, to 8 p.m. Saturday, March 1. The marathon will raise funds for the Teddi Project of Camp Good Days and Special Times, which grants seriously ill children such special wishes as trips to Disney World or Broadway plays.

According to the college, Fisher students have presented the dance marathon each year since 1983, raising more than \$250,000 for the Teddi Project.

Area disc jockeys, bands and dance instructors donate time to help the cause, while faculty staff and alumni often join in a five-hour mini-marathon.

For information, call 716/385-8104.

### Diocese sets tour of black colleges

High-school juniors and seniors interested in touring some of the nation's African-American colleges should call Jacquelyn Dobson, director of the Diocesan Office of Black Ministries, at 716/328-3210, ext. 332, or 1-800-388-7177. Dobson will lead a bus tour of black colleges from April 13 to April 19.

No further information was available by press time.

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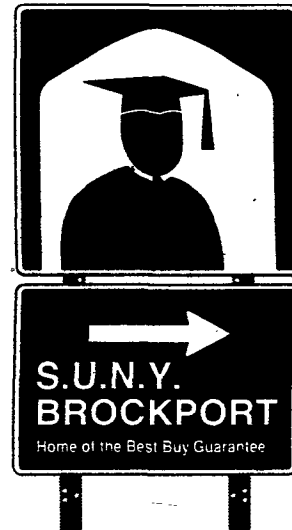
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