

School official recalls Sinatra's generous act

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Frank Sinatra's death late May 14 prompted a flood of tributes to one of the most renowned entertainment figures of the 20th century.

And at Geneva DeSales High School, Sinatra's passing, at the age of 82, struck an especially strong chord.

"I put the flag at half-mast this morning," said DeSales Principal Ed Tracey on May 15.

It was somewhat due to Sinatra's concern that the flag is still being raised and lowered at DeSales. Back in early 1981, Sinatra made a \$1,000 donation to the high school during a major fund drive.

"Everybody was pitching in to try to raise the funds," Tracey recalled.

During this period a DeSales student, Steve Bucklin, wrote Sinatra an appeal letter on behalf of the freshman class, of which he was president. Bucklin's aunt and uncle, who were big Sinatra fans, gave him the singer's address in Rancho Mirage, Ca.

In the letter, Bucklin explained that he was looking forward to graduating from DeSales because he was the eighth of nine children, and all his older siblings — as well as his parents — had attended the Catholic school in Geneva.

"I was a class official, and I felt as though it was my duty to write a little letter," said Bucklin, a 1984 DeSales graduate who now resides in Portsmouth, N.H.

About a week later, he said, a check for \$1,000 — signed by Sinatra's accountant, Nathan Golden — showed up. Bucklin noted that the check was made out to DeSales High School but sent to his aunt and uncle's address.

"I was quite surprised. My first impression was, 'Is this real?'" Bucklin said. "I couldn't wait to bring it to school."

Bucklin recalled that after presenting the check to Tracey, the principal "basically almost hugged me. He couldn't believe it. He had Sinatra music going on the intercom all day," Bucklin said he re-

members Sinatra's "New York, New York" — a big hit at the time — being played several times.

Tracey, who has seen Sinatra twice in concert, added that he was indeed shocked that Bucklin's request had been honored.

"I was delighted. You never know," he said. "At the top of the check it said 'Frank Sinatra, Wells Fargo Bank' on it. I keep a copy of it under my desk top."

Bucklin's mother, Pat, said she was impressed that her son, a total stranger to Sinatra, was able to elicit such a response from somebody so famous.

"It was just the fact that the common person could get through to him, or a representative," Pat Bucklin commented.

However, Steve Bucklin said he felt he had nothing to lose by trying.

"If you don't ask, you don't get. The likelihood of receiving the check is basically zero," Bucklin, 31, remarked. Now a sales representative, Bucklin said he often recalls this Sinatra story for inspiration.

Bucklin said he heard about Sinatra's death over the radio the morning of May 15. The news caught him by surprise because he had not heard Sinatra was gravely ill, even though he had been sick for several months. Sinatra died of a heart attack.

"Within 10 seconds of hearing that, I went right back to the time I opened up that letter," Bucklin said.

The funeral Mass for Sinatra, who was Catholic, was scheduled for May 20 at Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Beverly Hills, Ca. Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles was to serve as celebrant.

Bucklin noted that much has been made of Sinatra's public persona, which includes similar charitable gestures but also drunken sprées, womanizing and alleged associations with mobsters.

"To each his own. He was obviously a generous man who had good times and bad. But his music will be with us forever," Bucklin said. "I think even the people who criticize him will say he was a great musician."



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

And they're off

Kindergartners Olivia Graham, center, and Brittany Sherry, right, with water bottles in hand and sporting school-supplied sunglasses, begin a Mother of Sorrows School Walkathon May 15. Kindergartners through third-graders walked 1.5 miles in the school's Greece parking lot while fourth- through eighth-graders walked 3.8 miles through the neighborhood. Some 350 children took part. They'd collected pledges to purchase scientific and technical equipment as well as for tuition assistance.

Sr. Dietz to fill sacramental post

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

GATES — Sister Karen Marie Dietz, SSJ, has been named coordinator of sacramental catechesis in the Diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis, effective June 1.

Sister Dietz has been serving as director of faith formation at Holy Ghost Church, 220 Coldwater Road, since June 1997. She has also worked as a consultant for the diocese on parish sacramental programs since September 1997. In her new position, she will be replacing Barbara Carroll.

Sister Dietz will oversee diocesan training and support for parish programs in marriage preparation, confirmation, first Eucharist, first penance, baptismal preparation and the Rite of Christian Initiation

of Adults. In concert with the diocesan Office of Liturgy, Sister Dietz will also coordinate diocesan marriage preparation as well as diocesan wedding jubilee and RCIA celebrations.

Maribeth Mancini, diocesan director of the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis, said Sister Dietz is well-qualified for her new job.

"Karen was an outstanding candidate for the position, and we're delighted that we'll have the opportunity to work with her in the coming years," Mancini said.

Prior to serving at Holy Ghost, Sister Dietz worked as Christian formation director at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Mendon from 1988 to 1997. Before that, she worked in religious education at parishes in Palmyra, Marion and Gates.

A religious since 1987, when she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph, Sister Dietz holds a master's degree in religious education from Fordham University in the Bronx.

Sister Dietz said she wants to work with parishes in developing evangelization programs designed, in part, to reach Catholics alienated from the church. She added that she considers sacramental preparation vital to the Catholic faith.

"I love the sacraments," she said. "They're a real mark of our church, and to have a real appreciation for the sacraments is to be intimately Catholic."

Bishop Clark announces priests' pastoral appointments

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following pastoral appointments effective June 30, except as noted:

Father William Graf, from pastor, Most Precious Blood Church, Rochester, to administrator, Church of the Resurrection, Perinton, effective Sept. 1.

Father John Mulligan, from moderator of the Pastoral Office, to pastor, Most Precious Blood Church, Rochester, concurrent with continuing duties as vicar general, effective Sept. 1.

Father Richard Shatzel, from parochial vicar, Our Mother of Sorrows Church, Greece, to pastor, St. Mary's Church, Bath, and sacramental minister, St. Gabriel Church, Hammondsport.

Father Eugene Weis, from sabbatical to pastor, St. Mary's Church, Waterloo.

Father Lance Gonyo, from parochial vicar, St. Pius the Tenth Church, Chili, to parochial vicar, Holy Family Cluster (Dansville, Wayland, Cohocton, Perkinsville).

Father Kip Corriveau to sacramental minister, St. Joseph's Church, Rush, concurrent with duties as parochial vicar, St. Louis Church, Pittsford, effective Sept. 1.

Father Timothy Niven, scheduled for ordination June 6, to priest intern, St. Patrick's Church, Owego, St. John the Evangelist, Newark Valley, and St. Francis of Assisi, Catatonk.

Father Michael Mayer, scheduled for ordination June 6, to priest intern, St. Pius the Tenth Church, Chili.

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