

DIOCESAN NEWS

Sled accident disables a 'neighborhood dad'

By Kathleen Schwar
Assistant editor

Joe Gaudio, 42, loves kids and the outdoors. Close to 8 o'clock the night of Jan. 12, he decided to make one last run on an inner tube-type sled at Cobbs Hill Park in Rochester. His son, R.J., 8, waited at the top of the hill.

When his father hit a chunk of frozen snow and ice, flew off the inner tube, and landed unmoving, R.J. thought maybe his father was joking.

"They joke all the time," explained Gaudio's sister, Patricia Calabro. But Gaudio was paralyzed from the waist down. He is undergoing rehabilitation at Strong Memorial Hospital, where he was transferred from Rochester General Hospital.

"From what the surgeons tell us, there is a very, very small chance that he will walk," Calabro said. "We are hopeful, we have to remain with some kind of hope."

Meanwhile, Kimberly Flanagan, Gaudio's niece, took matters into her own hands to increase that hope. She alerted media and her former school, Bishop Kearney High School, to the misfortune and to a pasta dinner fundraiser being planned.

The school offered to host the benefit, now scheduled for 1 to 6 p.m. Sunday, March 18. Flanagan had attended Kearney until her junior year, leaving in 1991, and later completed her GED.

Kearney spokesman Mark Ball said he planned to recruit students to volunteer time that day if possible. "It's just a horribly tragic event," he said. "We always talk about Bishop Kearney being a family community, and part of being family is to be there for our students who are here or no longer here."

In her letter, Flanagan, a parishioner at Irondequoit's Christ the King Church,

wrote that her uncle's family "still remain strong in faith and hope that one day, Joe will walk again."

"Our goal is to turn their garage into his living area since he is not able to move freely in a two-story home," she stated. "To accomplish this will be very difficult physically, mentally and financially."

Already the family has received donations from friends and acquaintances. Some callers have offered to help renovate the Gaudio's two-story colonial home in Gates. Calls are being taken by Flanagan, at 716/377-3796, and Calabro, at 716/342-8161. Contributions are being accepted at Gaudio Family Fund, P.O. Box 64877, Rochester, NY 14624-7377.

Gaudio lives in Gates with his wife, Renee, R.J. and daughter, Gina, 3. He has been employed by Qualitrol Corp. in Fairport for 18 years. He is "like the neighborhood dad," Renee said, always taking kids ice skating, rollerblading and to the park.

This winter, legislators in Monroe County have been debating whether to more strictly enforce the ban on sledding in all parks, or to make certain areas safe for sledding. "Sledding is only allowed in designated areas in the county park system and none are designated," said James Smith, county spokesman.

Gaudio and his wife still believe families should be able to sled, according to Calabro. What happened was an accident, she said. Apparently her brother hit the base of a snowman that had frozen in the rain.

"From what the doctor told us, when he hit the base, it was hitting a concrete wall," she said.

Although Gaudio said he doubted his son would sled with him again, he added in a brief interview, "Someday I hope to ... Give me a year."

"St. Jude is going to be the one to help me. That is certainly firm in my head."



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

A parish rededication

Bishop Matthew H. Clark blesses the altar in the new daily Mass chapel during the rededication of St. Ambrose Church in Rochester Feb. 18. The parish was celebrating a major renovation.

Recognizing

★ St. Louis School, Pittsford, raised more than \$1,300 in December for such groups as Head Start, Andrew's Center, Dimitri House and St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center. Each student took home a mission box. Students and their families asked themselves "Do I really need this?" whenever a purchase was to be made, and contributed the money if the answer was "no." Students also collected 1,119 pairs of new socks, underwear, undershirts and diapers during their annual Advent Underwear Drive.

★ Students, faculty, staff and parents at All Saints Junior High School,

Rochester, collected 270 bars of soap, 92 tubes of toothpaste, 106 boxes of hot chocolate and 453 pairs of socks during Advent to distribute during Lent to soup kitchens, the St. Theodore, and Mount Carmel food cupboards, and families in Kosovo.

★ Father Jim Hastings, a native of Geneva, has been re-elected vice-director of the U.S. region of the Columban Fathers Missionary Society. The 55-year-old priest was assigned to Japan after his ordination in 1972, and returned after 10 years to teach theology in Chicago. Vice-director since 1994, Father Hastings heads up the society's fundraising program for its missions in Asia, Latin America and Fiji.

Advocates keep close eye on legislative proposals, advise action

By Kathleen Schwar
Assistant editor

A Wayne County group is closely following the new Congress as it undertakes its agenda.

The Legislative Advocacy Network of the Catholic Communities of Western Wayne County plans to be vocal and to urge others to voice their opinions as well, according to Pat Malach, a key organizer, from St. Michael's Parish in Newark.

"I am excited about it," said Malach, who has been active in the pro-life movement. "I was stymied. I didn't know how to inform the parishioners." Then last spring she attended a seminar co-sponsored by the diocese and organizations within it. The seminar gave Malach and others the inspiration and direction they needed.

"I just wanted to be able to get information out to people on critical legislation," she said. Late last year the network began sending out alerts about legislative issues. In December the network sent out its first three "action alerts." The first urged timely passing of the federal budget; the second, full funding for Title XX social services block-grant money; and the third, passing Medicare appropriations for hospitals and other health-care deliverers. The alerts went to network members, who now number 36.

"What we ask them to do is respond to six alerts," Malach said. The network provides addresses of legislators, phone numbers and advice on how to express themselves. For instance, a one-page letter generally has more impact than a five-pager.

"You keep it brief and you keep it to one issue," Malach said. "And thank-yous are nice, too."

Malach and Donna Camblin of St. Ann's Parish in Palmyra, who co-organized LAN, were inspired by a workshop last April at the Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua. It was sponsored by the diocese, Catholic Charities, the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of St. Joseph. The focus was how a person's faith can change the world, with talks by Michael A. Culliton of the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn., and Sister Patricia Schoelles, SSJ, president of St. Bernard's Institute.

"What we had hoped was it would spark a movement to do exactly what Pat Malach picked up on and did," said Scarlett Emerson, one of the workshop organizers and director of parish and community development for Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes. When she heard of the Wayne County group, she said, "I was absolutely thrilled. I really give them credit for following through on something."

LAN keeps watch over proposed legislation via the Web sites of such organizations as the National Council of Catholic Bishops and the NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice lobby. Malach said issues of concern include the death penalty, migrant workers, pro-life matters and housing, "anything that is part of the social teaching of the church."

With Camblin, Malach and Emerson on the network steering committee are Deacon Jerry Skerrett of St. Mary's of the Lake, Ontario; Flora Appleton of St. Patrick's Parish, Macedon; Lainie Hawley of Church of the Epiphany, Sodus; and Gerri Sweet of St. Mary's of the Lake.

A similar network is operated out of the Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier's justice and peace office.

"Basically it is a telephone-tree network," said Kathleen Dubel, office direc-

tor. She alerts people across five counties to write or call state or national legislators on issues that are diocesan public-policy priorities. Some individual parishes also have telephone trees, she said.


Between these alerts, her office maintains a legislative update line at 607-734-9784, ext. 9. Recently in regard to tax-cut proposals, it suggested that callers urge that people who don't itemize their tax returns be allowed to take charitable tax deductions, and also urge benefits for low-income families, especially expanded child tax credits and earned income tax credit for families with three or more children.

"You've heard of the two feet of Christ-


ian charity, charity and justice?" Emerson said. "One is concentrated on direct ministries; the other is advocacy. It is important that both feet be firmly on the ground and march forward. What happens often is that direct service becomes the heavier foot. ... But it is as important as doing direct service to look behind, to see why these direct services are needed, why is it important to keep stocking food shelves."

LAN will share its experiences at the March 24 Finger Lakes Social Ministry Day, Emerson said, and members plan to go to Albany March 13 for the annual Public Policy Forum sponsored by the New York State Catholic Conference.

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