

Students spawn Webs of intrigue

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

Once upon a time, helping Mom and Dad with the family business may have meant stacking boxes or sweeping the floor on Saturday mornings. Compare that to the students at St. Ann's School in Hornell, whose sharp computer skills are making them hot commodities in their homes.

Their expertise has been polished via a first-year course in which they recently created their own Web sites over an eight-week period. Results can be found by visiting www.stannshornell.com, then clicking the "Classroom Pages" link, then "Computer."

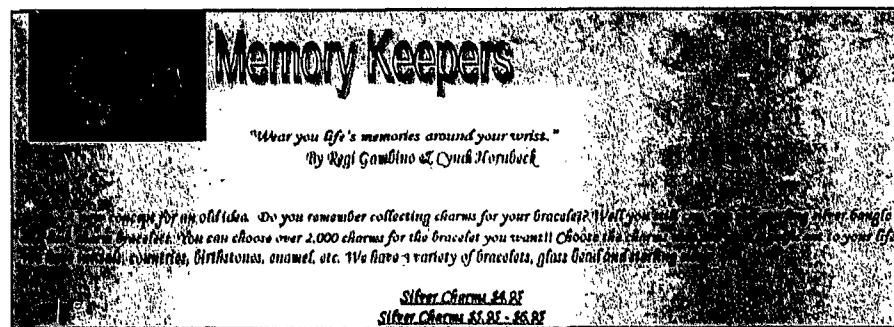
One of the more notable works came from seventh-grader Gloria Gambino, who made a Web site to promote her mother's charm-bracelet business. Gloria listed the business's different offerings, designing stylish pages and even taking her own digital photography.

"(My mother) has had people tell her it's a great Web site. She's definitely gotten business from it," said

Gloria, 13, who added that her father now wants her to make a Web site for his plumbing business.

According to seventh-graders Christina Losecco and Gabby Rinaldi, their services are being sought as well — Christina to make a Web site for her father's meat market and deli, and Gabby for her dad's electric and sign business. They honed their skills through partnering up for the St. Ann's project by making two Web sites devoted to ghosts. Christina and Gabby even developed a "hypertext," — creating links between their pages. Visitors to the sites are treated to a ghost story, descriptive information about ghosts, and results of a survey to see how many St. Ann's students believe in ghosts.

Christina and Gabby explained that their theme grew out of a prank



Courtesy of St. Ann Hornell

St. Ann's School seventh-grader Gloria Gambino created a Web site to promote her mother's charm-bracelet business.

they had devised about a ghost that allegedly lurks in a school bathroom.

"We made kids think there was this ghost in the stall. They were really nervous about it," said Christina, 12.

"We scared everybody. It was really funny," added Gabby, 13.

Among the other topics selected by St. Ann's students were Halloween, sports cars, dancing, gymnastics, music, dogs, hockey, airplanes, Alexander the Great, horses and motorcycles. Penny Dessena, the course's instructor, said she let the youths choose their own areas of interest, saying, "I gave them free rein, within reason."

The Web pages were created from Microsoft Word documents. Students also learned how to apply colors, fonts and photographs.

"It's a little more creative than do-

ing memos and letters," Dessena said of the curriculum.

Beyond the technical aspects, youths have also learned about Internet ethical and legal standards, such as copyright restrictions when material is copied and pasted off other Web sites. Dessena further observed that this school work, being on public display, requires extra caution in such areas as spelling and grammar. "It does teach them about taking pride in their work," she said.

Dessena also teaches computer at nearby colleges and as a corporate trainer. However, she said her young pupils at St. Ann's often grasp the same material she presents to adults just as quickly.

"The kids have no intimidation. They are very, very savvy," Dessena stated. "I'm very pleased. We have so much fun."

"I'm not any 2nd grader.
I'm a Catholic School 2nd grader.
And I'm proud of it."

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