



Journal photo by Jim Gehrz

Vivian Toy (second row right) joined student friends in the stands for a Friday night St. Francis football game

Game, dance add zest

High school social life flourishes on Fridays

BY VIVIAN TOY

Of the Journal staff

It's the day of the first home football game, and pompon girls and cheerleaders shuffle down the halls in their red-and-white saddle shoes, dressed in bright St. Francis High School sweaters and mini-skirts.

The boys on the team wear their numbered jerseys.

The students bear their school colors with pride.

The questions of the day are: "Are you going to the game tonight?" "How about the pep assembly?" "How about the dance?"

After their last classes on this Friday afternoon, students file into the gym for a pep assembly.

Each class level sits together in a block of bleachers. The students scan the rows for their friends. They call out to one an-

other and climb over other students to get to the seats they want.

A teacher calls the assembly to order and introduces the pompon squad, the Marinettes.

A dozen girls bound onto the gym floor and take their places. The teacher turns on an enormous boom box and the girls perform to Kenny Loggins' "Danger Zone."

The Marinettes draw applause as they dance, and they're cheered when they finish. But not everyone is enchanted by them.

Someone in the audience points at one of the Marinettes and says, "She doesn't smile enough."

Another girl scowls throughout the performance and says: "I hate cheerleaders. They're so stuck up."

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Football game, dance bring out the students

Game, from Metro Page

It's time for the class competitions. A teacher calls out the names of three students from each class to participate in a class relay. They must run across the gym wearing flippers on their feet, while carrying an open umbrella in one hand and a tennis ball on a spoon in the other.

As tradition dictates, the freshmen are booed mercilessly at every turn.

"Look at those freshmen, they look so little," says a senior girl. "They are," her friend replies. "They're so squirrelly!"

But the freshmen bear up well. They emerge from the relay cheering and victorious.

Next, the spirit competition. The teachers set up a noise meter and a pole of colored lights. The lights flash on with each cheer. The louder the cheer, the more lights.

Cheerleaders, a smaller troupe of girls without pompons, lead each class in a rousing cheer of "Fight team fight!"

There is a three-way tie for the first time with the freshmen lagging.

In the end, the sophomores out-cheer the upperclassmen.

The assembly ends in a screaming match between the sophomores and the freshmen, the victors of the two competitions.

Everyone is geared up now, ready for the game. St. Francis narrowly beats Milwaukee's Rufus King, 21-20.

At the second home game of the season, St. Francis is pitted against West Milwaukee.

Another in a series of articles about high school life in 1988. Reporter Vivian S. Toy spent three weeks posing as a senior at St. Francis High School.

The crowd roars as the St. Francis Mariners run onto the brightly lit field.

The cheerleaders face the crowd in a line, clapping and shouting cheers at them.

"Nuh-nuh-nuh-no-body messes with the Mariner Machine! Nuh-nuh-nuh-no-body!"

"R-O-W-D-I-E, row-die, let's get rowdie, whoo!"

"We're big, B-I-G! We're bad, B-A-D! We're boss, B-O-S-S-B-O-S-S, BOSS!"

The girls get little response from the crowd.

Once the game starts, few people pay very close attention to what's happening on the field. They spend most of the time crowd-watching and talking.

A few girls keep their eyes glued to a specific player because "he's cute."

"Look! There he is! He's on the field!"

When one girl returns to her seat after chatting with a boy at the St. Francis yard line, her friend asks her, "Do you like him?"

She squeals an emphatic "No!" "Does he like you?"

"I don't know. Maybe. I guess. Why?"

Her friend replies. "I don't know. Just ask."

Later a boy comes over to the girls, acting a little giddy.

"Have you been drinking?" one girl asks.

"Yeah, sure," he answers. "We had a case."

"Where'd you go?" she asks.

He waves his arm in the direction of the lake and says, "Over there." Then he leaves with the four buddies he came with.

St. Francis wins the game, 13-7. The crowd cheers, but there is little fanfare.

Students straggle toward the cafeteria, where a dance already has started. The lunch tables have been pushed aside to make room for a dance floor.

Teachers acting as chaperones make sure that students pay the admission fee—and watch so no one wanders toward the lake.

At first the only ones dancing are "220 kids," black students from Milwaukee attending St. Francis under the Chapter 220 desegregation program. They came to St. Francis on yellow school buses for the game and the dance.

Of the 382 students at St. Francis, 39 are Chapter 220 students. About a dozen minority students who live in St. Francis attend the school.

The disc jockey plays primarily rap songs and funk, interspersed with a few 1950s classics such as "Rock Around the Clock" and "Shout."

One girl sits out the first few songs.

"I don't like this music," she complains. "But they play it for the 220

kids because they don't always like the same music we do."

One boy asks, "Who are all these black kids?"

"They're ours," a senior girl replies. "And their guests. I think it's good though, to get more integration, you know."

Eventually, the rest of the students join in. Most of them dance in groups of three or more. There are only a few couples on the dance floor. The girls dance with girls. The boys dance with boys. The 220 kids dance with 220 kids.

When a slow song plays, the dancers pair off, leaving an excess of girls along the sidelines.

The girls spend the time surveying the crowd and gossiping.

"Let's see if there are any new couples."

"Look at the way she's dancing!" Focus falls on a girl dancing alone, gyrating her hips and suggestively thrusting her pelvis.

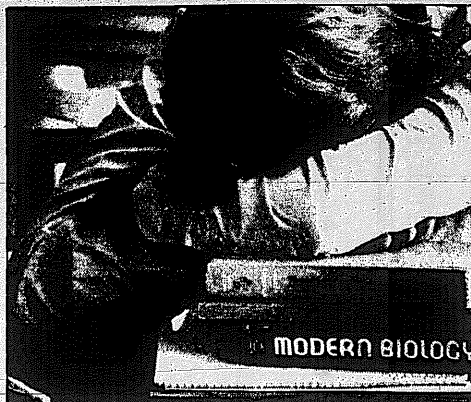
"I bet half the kids here are drunk," a senior girl points out.

Students who drink do so before the dance, either at the lake or at someone's house.

"But they only get in trouble if they're caught, like if they get sick or something," a girl says.

By the end of the night, close to 100 people have turned out, the biggest crowd a St. Francis school dance has drawn in years.

Next: Time out for lunch



Journal photo by Jim Gehrz

Richard Fisher rested at the end of his study hall

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A subject that gets attention

On the third day of classes at St. Francis High School, a group of senior girls sits at lunch, chatting about the usual topics: clothes, boys, make-up.

But when the name of a sophomore girl comes up, a new strain of gossip starts flowing.

One girl leans forward, waves four fingers in the air and whispers across the table, "She's four months' pregnant."

Another girl says: "Is she really? I thought so, but I was looking at her yesterday and she couldn't be pregnant."

"Why you know?"

The girls at the table crane their necks to try to catch a glimpse of the pregnant sophomore.

"She and her boyfriend are still going together, but he's 24 or something," one girl says.

The group expresses mild shock. "Another girl adds, "And he's colored, too."

Another girl at another table mentions a senior who is pregnant.

"The guy's out of the picture and she's seven months' pregnant I think. And after she has it, she's going to give it up for adoption."

Her friend replies: "Oh, I'd get an abortion, or if I had it, I wouldn't want to give it up for adoption and have someone else take it."

The other girls at the table nod in agreement.

Later that day during a casual dis-

ussion in a Spanish class, one girl blurts out in Spanish that she knows of three girls in the school who are pregnant, two are seniors and the third is a sophomore.

The class of seven girls is instantly attentive. The teacher tries in vain to change the subject, especially because in their excitement, the students are lapsing into English.

By the second week of school, word of the few student pregnancies has spread throughout the school and runs its course. The topic is no longer a subject of excitement.

When a recent St. Francis graduate brings her 18-month-old daughter to a football game, students see teenage pregnancy from a different perspective.

The little girl is paraded around the stands by her mother and her mother's friends.

"Say hi, say hi," the teenagers command as they wave the child's arm in the air.

The toddler graciously greets everyone she is introduced to and doesn't seem to mind being carted back and forth by a series of different people.

But the kids in the crowd are mostly blasé. Their only comments are renditions of "She's a cute kid, huh?"

—VIVIAN S. TOY

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