



Al Lanigan, the only principal Larkshire Elementary School has ever had, helps youngsters on the school bus. Lanigan marks his 25th year with the school, as the school marks its 25th anniversary.

RANDY BOSTA (staff photographer)

## Blast off

Parents, students, teachers rev up to mark 25th anniversary

By Loraine McClish  
staff writer

**L**ARKSHIRE FIFTH GRADERS are in rehearsal now for their "Great Ball of Fire" production, a song that was on the top of the charts in 1965. Letters have been sent to teachers, secretaries, custodians, past PTA presidents, any and all staff that once worked in the school to call them back. The agenda is in place. Committees are being formed.

Students, parents and teachers are on the countdown now to "Blast Off," the March 1 assembly that blasts off a year long celebration to mark the elementary school's 25th anniversary.

Actually it will be a double celebration, in part for the school and in part for Al Lanigan, who is the only principal the school has ever had.

"He and the school are synonymous," said Sandy Spaulding, who with Marcia Larscheidt are the PTA representatives on the committee that has planned the events for the anniversary year.

"We're a very harmonious group," she said of the parents and teachers at the school. "I can only talk for the last couple of years since I've been there, but in that period of time it's been easy to recognize that he (Lanigan) is what has held us all together."

"I think our Fun Fair is a good example of how we work together at the school. It is huge compared to any other elementary school and it is not a fund raiser. It is a fun thing for the kids — their reward for putting in a good year at school! Dinner and an ice cream social every year and these aren't fund-raisers either. They are a chance for us to get to know one another."

"But we also make money for the school. Just in the last couple of

*'I can only talk for the last couple of years since I've been there, but in that period of time it's been easy to recognize that he (Al Lanigan) is what has held us all together.'*

— Sandy Spaulding



years we've bought computers, did some landscaping, fenced in a bike rack and bought thousands of dollars worth of playground equipment," she said.

ALL COMERS are welcome to the Blast Off assemblies at 10 a.m. and again at 10:45 a.m. Thursday, March 1, in the school at 23800 Tuck Road.

"The programs will be emceed by a clown. Background music will be popular tunes of the '60s," Spaulding said.

"The event is a review of the people who have made Larkshire a school that believes all children can learn; the people that have accepted the responsibility to help the students achieve maximum individual development so that they would become responsible members of society," she said.

Music of the '60s is the order day for the after-school sock hop for the students in mid-March, and again for the evening sock hop planned for parents.

Open House is set for 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 13.

Every wing in the school and its halls will be decorated with anything pertaining to the era it is assigned spanning the past 25 years.

"All of the walls will be covered with posters, with pictures of activities that were important to the school in the past 25 years," Spaulding said. "Our (PTA) historians did their work. We have a lot of history to display."

May 14-18 is Spirit Week, with all the theme days and hoop-la that implies.

A special day within that week is May 17, designated as "Grandparents Day" for the students to introduce their school and their grandparents to one another.

May 19 is the day set for the annual Fun Fair, which promises to be "bigger and better than ever," Spaulding said.

The last of the special events scheduled for the 1989-90 school year is a Time Capsule Burying Ceremony set for June 4.

## Concert in the Afternoon

Broadway star returns to Mercy where he got his musical start

By Loraine McClish  
staff writer

**J**OSEPH KOLINSKI, starring on Broadway in "Les Miserables" and simultaneously appearing on the day time soap "One Life to Live," is the headliner for Mercy High School's "Concert in the Afternoon."

This is the second annual concert to benefit the Rosemary Clooney Friendship Fund, which was initiated by the singing star when she appeared in concert here last year. The fund was set up to provide scholarships to the all girl high school in Farmington Hills.

"We were able to give financial assistance to 104 girls with the money raised from the Rosemary Clooney concert (last year)," said Larry Teevens, music director for the school. "We are not going to become a suburban school. We want Mercy

to be known as a Metro area school and we're doing it."

Show time is 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 25, in the school auditorium on the corner of 11 Mile and Middlebelt Road.

General admission is \$10. All seats are reserved.

Preferred seating is \$30 and includes a champagne and hors d'oeuvre reception.

Tickets can be ordered through the school office, 476-8020.

KOLINSKI GOT his musical start by auditioning for a part in one of Mercy's musicals when he was a student at Detroit Catholic Central.

"When he was a freshman he got a spot in the chorus. When he was a senior he was the male lead," Teevens said. "We claim him as one of ours."

Kolinski's climb up the musical ladder included roles in Dearborn Players, Greenfield Village, Univer-

sity of Detroit, Hillyberry, Michigan Opera Theatre and Birmingham Theatre productions.

The next ranges of that ladder included appearances from coast to coast, national tours, Off-Broadway and a string of shows on Broadway before landing the part of Enjolras in "Les Miz," as it has come to be called.

Today, at 35, Kolinski can look out his apartment window and see his name in lights on the marquee of the theatre where he's worked since the show opened in 1987.

Teevens, who was Kolinski's first music teacher, traveled to New York to see the show and visit with his former pupil. When Teevens asked him about doing the continuation of the Rosemary Clooney Friendship Club concerts, Kolinski responded that he'd "love to do it," Teevens said.

As a bonus, Kolinski is bringing his fiancée with him to appear in "Concert in the Afternoon." She is Alison

Lewandowski, a native Detroit who was a featured player in Bob Fosse's "Dancin'" and one of the original company in Gower Champion's "42nd Street." She is also a former pupil of Teevens.

THE MERCYAIRES, the high school's select ensemble of singers and musicians who appeared with Rosemary Clooney in concert last season, will be backing up Kolinski in concert.

Others on the playbill are The Matt Michaels' Quartet and The Groynors.

"We've invited parents of students who sing and friends who sing for our grand finale," Teevens said.

The grand finale for "Concert in the Afternoon" will be the same as the grand finale for "Les Miserables," a medley of songs from the show ending up with "Do You Hear the People Sing?"



Joseph Kolinski



Alison Lewandowski

## Tips help parents ease the tension divorce creates

**M**ANY DIVORCED PARENTS, eager to help their children cope with the stresses produced by divorce, assume that youngsters will welcome the opportunity to talk candidly about their feelings.

When parents broach the subject, however, they are often surprised and dismayed because children clam up and suffer in silence. Many children — 30 to 50 percent — will suffer for years.

"Most children hate talking about distressing feelings, so they are notably unresponsive to their parents' overtures," said University of Michigan psychology professor Neil M. Kalter, director of the U-M Center for the Child and the Family.

Kalter is the author of a new book, "Growing Up With Divorce: Helping Your Child Avoid Immediate and Later Emotional Problems."

"They can't find the right words for their feelings until the mid-teens and they can't analyze their feelings with any objectivity until the late teens," Kalter wrote.

BUT "THERE are strategies parents can use that will draw children into a form of discussion about the divorce," he said.

"The strategies, called 'displacement techniques,' can help parents discover a child's hidden fears — the root of the distress — so they can give the child the reassurances and explanations that are the key to

avoiding lasting problems.

"To be frightened and sad, or to feel behaviorally out of control is bad enough," Kalter said. "To feel isolated in their distress is unbearable for children."

COMMUNICATION BREAKS through the sense of isolation, he said, but circumventing a child's defenses often requires "displacement techniques" that allow parent and child to talk about issues without appearing to do so.

"Displacement techniques rely on hand puppets, dolls and doll houses, action figures, drawings, stories and brief general statements about 'kids in your situations.'"

There are several steps to a com-

munication strategy based on displacement, according to Kalter:

For younger children, start by using toys. Toys will set the stage to act out the precise behavior that shows you that your child is in distress.

For instance, if your daughter weeps when she is about to go off to her father's new home with him, have a baby doll cling to the mother doll and cry about leaving. Then comment that the little girl in the story seems very upset.

Act out and verbalize the underlying emotional pain the displaced figure is feeling.

Say, "The little girl seems very

scared and doesn't want to leave her mom. Look how she is holding on to her mother like she wants to stay with her."

Then ask the child what happens next. At this point, the child may burst out with something that will suggest her underlying fears, such as, "The little girl goes to the daddy's house and the mommy marries her boyfriend and they leave the little girl forever."

Correct fears and misperceptions the child may have.

Say, "The mommy doll would never get married without talking to the little girl and if she did get married, she would still live with her mom, no matter what. That's how it is be-

tween moms and daughters."

Show by matter-of-fact comments that it is all right to feel conflicted and angry. ("The little girl seems very angry that her mom is going on dates.")

Suggest alternative ways of expressing and coping with conflicts. ("Maybe if the little girl told her mom she wanted to spend more time with her, the mom would plan special times just for her alone.")

The storytelling may have to be completed over a period of weeks or months, Kalter said, but can be varied by using different tools — drawings or hand puppets, for example.