

Francophiles celebrate France chez Mercy

By Casey Hens
staff writer

O ooh . . . la la!
Again this year, the Mercy High School drama studio was transformed into a "petite" bit of France, featuring appropriate cultural foods, props and entertainment — all the culmination of hard work by hundreds of students, staff and parents.

"It went superb — it was way beyond my expectations," said Joyce Smetanka, a French teacher and the impetus behind the annual event. "Usually we focus on drama, athletics and yearbook. This is something that's strictly an academic organization. It gives them something to socialize in . . . and be proud of."

The French Cafe is sponsored by the school's French Honor Society,

which has 95 members and 40 candidates this year, all of whom were involved in planning the event. Visitors to the cafe included teachers, parents and Mercy French students.

New this year was an Opening Night, which 150 parents, adult education students from Schoolcraft and Mercy colleges and representatives from the French Institute of Detroit attended.

THE CAFE was designed to look like a street in France. It included food booths, decorations, artists, mimes and other things to add a French style to the decor. New props, including a nine-foot Eiffel Tower and an Arc de Triomphe, were added this year.

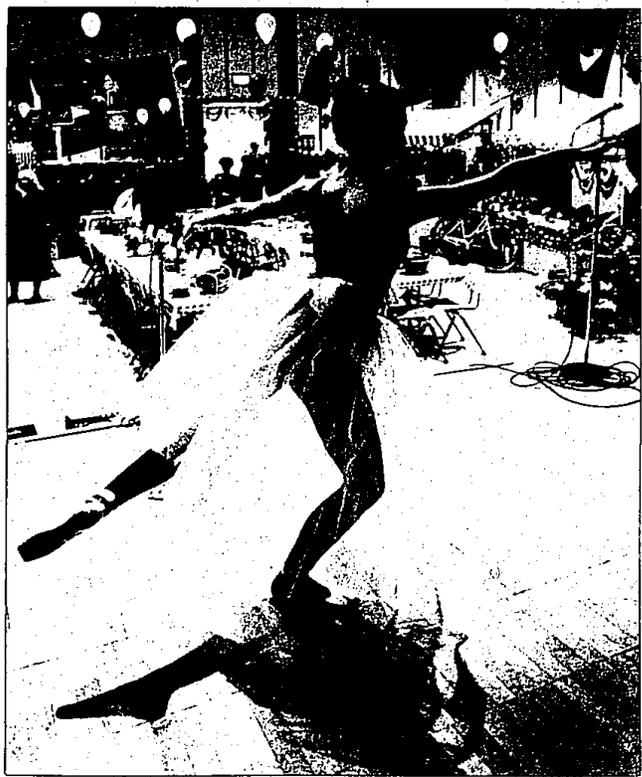
The student entertainment — a well-rehearsed show — was expanded to one hour and included the student orchestra, dancing and singing

and a performance of the French can-can by candidates to the honor society.

"I could not have done it myself this year," said Smetanka, lauding the involvement of parents, students and her co-workers. "The kids were so intent on putting on a polished show."

Smetanka said she may attempt to hold a workshop through Oakland Schools about the French Cafe to share her experiences with other teachers and schools in the county.

This year's French Cafe was moved to the fall so it would not intrude on the many other activities students have in the winter and spring. Similar programs are done each year for the other languages and cultures taught at the private, all-girls high school in Farmington Hills.



Mercy sophomore Meghan Roselle warms up for her ballet performance on the drama room stage. The French Cafe at Mercy can be seen in the background.



Kristen Block, a Mercy junior, hands out programs to visitors to the French Cafe. Parents played a major role in creating the booths.



Mimes played an important role in setting the tone and theme of this year's French Cafe at Mercy High School. Pictured here are students (left to right) Caroline Schaefer, Amy Daigler and Chandra Berger, who are rehearse their parts.

Staff photos
by Sharon LeMieux



Mercy senior Leslie Erin Gaiser performs French songs accompanied by her mother, Carol Gaiser, on piano.

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