

Suburban Life

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'Come on-a Our House'

Mercy presents evening with Rosemary Clooney

By M.B. Dillon
staff writer

Rosemary Clooney, the award-winning Wayne State University Jazz Band, and the singing and dancing Mercyaires will fill Mercy High School's auditorium with the strains of "Come On-a Our House," "The Basin Street Blues," a Johnny Mercer medley, and show tunes from "The King and I" and "All that Jazz" in a benefit concert at 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 10 at the high school.

Directing the jazz band will be pianist/composer/arranger Matt Michaels, who's performed with such artists as Vic Damone, Stan Kenton, Peggy Lee, Count Basie, Al Hirt, Doc Severinsen and Barbara Streisand.

Chairing the event, to include a "traveling supper" attended by Clooney, will be Ford Motor Co. chairman Harold "Red" Poling. The show will mark the ninth time



Rosemary Clooney

Clooney has performed with Mercyaires, said Larry Teevens, who is directing the Mercyaires for the 31st year.

Teevens goes way back with the Clooneys. As a young man launching his singing career, he performed with Clooney's late sister Betty.

Clooney and the Mercyaires have enjoyed a close relationship ever since the former big band star appeared at Sterling Heights' Premier Center years ago and needed a back-up act. Prominent area musician Johnny Trudell, a friend of Teevens, was the Center's music contractor and recommended the Mercyaires.

"I keep saying it was love at first sight between the girls and Rosemary," said Teevens. "We had a lot of things in common. I'd begun singing as a teenager with her sister Betty on WXYZ radio. And Rosemary attended Our Lady of Mercy High School in Cincinnati."

A longtime Clooney fan, Poling became a Mercyaire aficionado about seven years ago when at a charity event honoring the Ford executive at Cobo Hall, Clooney and the Mercyaires teamed up to entertain. "A nice sidelight was the fact that Rosemary Clooney wanted to buy a Lincoln Town Car," recalled Teevens.

Clooney and the Mercyaires have since performed together in Buffalo, N.Y., and at area venues including the Fox Theater, Meadowbrook and Orchestra Hall.

The school asked Clooney if she'd make the ninth collaboration a benefit for Mercy, at Mercy, said Robert Campion, Mercyaire choreographer.

The answer was an immediate

yes. "We will fly her here and put her up, but she is donating her time," said Campion, adding that "the kids are crazy rehearsing for this."

"Rosemary knows what we are trying to do as far as raising money, and she likes singing with the Mercyaires," Teevens said. "One of our

big goals is to keep tuition within reach of a wide segment of our population. We don't want to be the exclusive suburban school. One of the ways we do this is to aid our scholarship fund with this endeavor."

A treat is in store for both concertgoers and the Mercyaires, he added.

"The audience will see a world famous singer who is also a loving grandma, and isn't afraid to show it," Teevens said. "She is a total grown-up, and very down to earth."

Sponsored tickets for the concert and dinner are available for \$1,000,

\$500, \$350, and \$150. Tickets for the concert only are \$25.

Reservations are requested by March 2. The school is located at 29709 11 Mile Road at Middlebelt. For details, call 476-8922 or 476-3270.



SHARON LEMUEUX/staff photographer

Mercyaires (from left) Mary Gormley of Livonia, Leah Duncan of Berkley, Jan Greening of Farmington, Marjorie Parham of Oak Park and Amy Jennette of Farmington Hills rehearse "All that Jazz" in preparation for the March 10 concert with Rosemary Clooney.

It's back to Roaring '20's at silent auction

It'll be "Back to the Roaring '20's" at Mercy High School's chief fundraiser — a silent auction Friday, Feb. 28, and Saturday, Feb. 29, at Mercy, 29709 11 Mile at Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.

Bidders, many of them dressed in costumes and black ties, will select from items including full-length leather coats and diamond earrings, a Desmond Howard shirt and U-M

football, soccer ball signed by Pete, autographs of "L.A. Law" cast members and Detroit Lion Mike Utley, restaurant packages, golf outings, Waterford crystal, new roofs, massages, karaoke parties, collector baseball cards, and vacations on Mackinac Island, Marco Island, Fla., and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Friday's event, to be emceed by Channel 2's Joe Glover, kicks off at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$15, and light refreshments, hors d'oeuvres, drinks and dessert will be served. Five hundred items, valued at \$25 and up, will be auctioned.

Saturday's silent auction and live auction begin at 7 p.m. There'll be an open bar and a sit-down dinner. Tom Ryan of WOMC Radio will serve as master of ceremonies.

Entertainment will be the Mercy Mime Troupe as well as the Mer-

cyaires and choral groups, who will dance and sing a medley from the '20's.

Tickets for Saturday's auction are \$50. Tickets to attend both nights' events are \$40 per person.

Mercy director of development Johanna Monaghan said, "Our goal is to raise \$75,000, so we're hoping many Mercy alumni will attend."

Founded in 1945 by the Sisters of Mercy, the college preparatory

school has an enrollment of 775 young women. Mercy, like other schools, has felt the effects of a population decline among secondary school-age students.

Tuition this year is \$3,500 — about half the per-pupil allotment at public high schools.

Costs are defrayed through subsidies from the Sisters of Mercy, lower salaries, and scholarship donations. Mercy Principal Sr. Regina Marie

Doelker says affordable tuition "helps us maintain the socio-economically diverse student population that has enriched us over the years. Last year we were able to help about 100 families with the tuition assistance program so that their daughters would be able to attend Mercy."

The auction is the school's major fund-raiser. For more information, call 476-8020 or 476-8922.

The fruit of labor

Friend of the Pallottines visits Africa and sees work's result

By M.B. Dillon
staff writer

In the 1960s, the work of Patrick Sheehan, now a retired milkman living in Dearborn, was not lost on Mike Sullivan of Farmington Hills.

A native of County Cork, Ireland, Sheehan founded and for years coordinated a Detroit-area dinner dance to benefit an Irish order of missionary priests called the Pallottine Fathers.

Founded in 1835 by the Italian St. Vincent Pallotti, the international order now has 135 priests and lay brothers dedicated to mission retreats, propagating the faith, directing schools and colleges, and acting as chaplains to the armed forces, hospitals and institutions.

Much of the Pallottines' work is done in poor areas of Africa — a continent that's intrigued Sullivan since he began raising money for the order 22 years ago.

ALONG WITH a group of other Detroit-area residents, Sullivan has hosted a benefit dinner dance, held every October at Burton Manor (formerly Roma Hall) in Livonia. Sullivan

also started a raffle that in conjunction with the dinner dance has raised close to half a million dollars for the Pallottines.

Sullivan, who opened Waterville Construction in Farmington Hills in 1978, heard last year that a group of Pallottine priests from the U.S. was visiting Africa, and expressed interest in going.

"I thought he'd forget all about it, but he didn't," said the Rev. Stephen Keogh, the Pallottines' Wyandotte-based mission director.

Along with a few others, Keogh and Sullivan traveled in January to Pallottine posts in Kenya and Tanzania.

Sullivan was a guest of the Pallottines in Africa — a thank you "for his tremendous contributions for many years," said Keogh. "It was a hard trip. The people there really struggle, but they're happy. They have their own way of life."

Sullivan, who spent most of his 18 days in Tanzania, came home counting his blessings. He also gained a new appreciation for the Pallottines' dedication, and the beauty and rugged life in Africa.

FROM NAIROBI, Kenya where their flight landed, the visitors drove south over hole-filled mud roads in land rovers to Galapo, Tanzania, the Pallottines' African headquarters.

There, Sullivan saw one of the biggest investments the Pallottines have made with Detroiters' dollars — five tractors.

With members of the Maasai tribe, Fr. John Kelly farms 1,000 acres, said Sullivan, longtime chairman of the Detroit St. Patrick's Parade.

"His main objective is to feed peo-

ple. They grow maize, which is like corn, and beans. Father told me, 'If we don't have a drought, we have famine, and if we don't have famine, we have a drought.' He said if he had the guarantee of water, things would be dynamite."

The laborers, who earn \$1.50 a day, live on site during planting season because hours are long, and home, for the majority, is too far away, said Sullivan.

"They work in the fields until 6:30 at night. Then they sit under a tree in the dark. There's a cook who heats up maize in a big pot on a fire. To drink, there's tea and water."

"There are just a couple of little sheds, and a hut for the foreman. The other men sleep on the roof of a galvanized building on an old rug," said Sullivan.

A VISIT to the local pub is out of the question for most Maasai — a beer costs the equivalent of three days' wages.

"Fr. Kelly is building a large storehouse out of blocks they're making with cement, sand and water. Their hope is to put up enough beans and maize to survive a drought. Kelly hopes for measured success. 'He said if he made it (the farm) too successful, the government would probably take it away,' said Sullivan."

Plymouth's Judy Clatti has worked on the Pallottine dinner dance with Sullivan for several years. She Sullivan earned this trip to Africa.

"Mike was instituted the \$100 raffle tickets, and people said, 'It will never work.' But he's made it work,

'They work in the fields until 6:30 at night. Then they sit under a tree in the dark. There's a cook who heats up maize in a big pot on a fire. To drink, there's tea and water.'

— Mike Sullivan

even during the recession. He has four kids of his own, but still gives an awful lot of time to charity. The Pallottines' motto is 'The charity of

Christ urges me on.' That's what urges Mike on. He really does believe in it, and when he believes in it, he really works hard," Clatti said.



Photo courtesy of Mike Sullivan

Pallottine priest Sean Sweeney and Bridget Dolan, visiting from Wyandotte, enjoy a few moments with children near the Dungunji parish founded by the Irish missionary order in Tanzania.



Women from the Tanzanian village of Maklungu hoe their bean garden before Mass on a January afternoon. "All their hopes were propped up against the church," said Mike Sullivan of Farmington Hills, who visited Pallottine missionary priests in Africa.