

April 26-May 2, 1970

By Tom Bodle

The last Sunday of April was the first day of a series of events which would lead to the commencement of the class of 1970 from St. Joseph High School. An honored tradition for the graduating class was the senior-mother Communion breakfast. The Alumni Mothers Association and the Mothers Guild hosted over 200 seniors and their moms. Mass was held in the gym, followed by breakfast in the cafeteria. Hugs abounded during the sign of peace at Mass and throughout the morning as seniors shared stories of their high school years with classmates and their moms while dining and walking the school halls.



Capping off this last Sunday of April was a novel activity for Vikings, a road rally. Evan Zupancic and his Special Activity committee prepared this event, which had become quite popular in colleges. A team of at least two, a driver and a navigator, would embark on a timed excursion. Senior Jack Rhinehart helped plot out a seventy mile course through the roads of eastern Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga counties. Extra passengers were permitted and added to the fun. The route was held secret and given to the entrant at the start of their journey in the St. Joe parking lot. The key to victory was to be able to read and follow the directions, while maintaining the speed limit. Each entrant's time would be matched by the time established by the committee's mapping of the course. Over thirty entries participated on a cloudy, humid Sunday afternoon. The biggest challenge to the contestants was being able to read the street signs, especially in Geauga County. The committee stationed five checkpoints along the course to monitor the event. The difficulty of road signage and unexpected detours and distractions flustered many teams. Several simply gave up and were not seen until school the next day. Most returned flustered but having enjoyed a day on the road with schoolmates in truly a unique Viking springtime event.



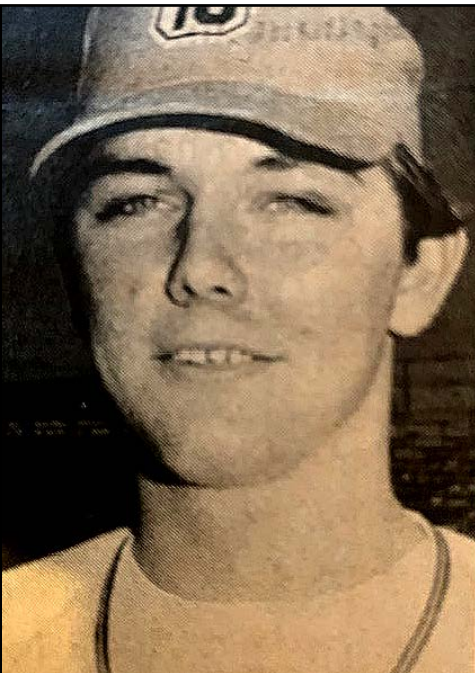
The celebration of Earth Day on April 22nd seemed momentarily to bring common cause across the nation's diverse political



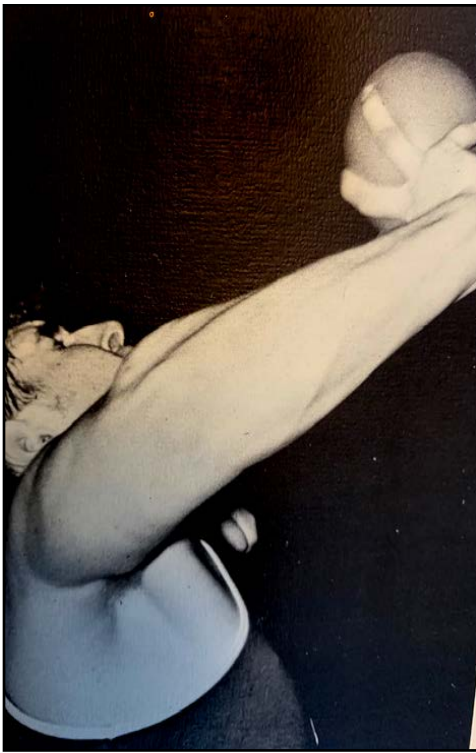
groups. But hopes of harmony were short-lived entering the last days of April. On April 29-30, the United States launched an incursion of military forces into Cambodia. Cambodia had become a staging area and sanctuary for North Vietnamese forces and the Viet Cong to attack South Vietnam and the U.S. forces there. President Nixon announced the military action as needed to protect American and South Vietnam troops. But in the U.S. many saw this action as a ramping up of the war and not the scaling down as promised. By May 1st anti-war protests heightened on campuses throughout the country.



May 1st, “May Day!” For almost a century, workers movements celebrated May 1st as a measure of solidarity and a demonstration for fair wages, equal opportunities, safe work environment and protests against big industry. In the 60’s, social and racial issues became intertwined with May Day events. Eventually the anti-war movement tied in too. With the U.S. incursion into Cambodia, May Day, 1970 created a powder keg environment across the nation. The first major target was Yale University. Even prior to the U.S. action, a variety of groups focused on New Haven, Connecticut for demonstrations. Black Panther activist Bobby Seale was slated for trial there. He was accused of complicity in the murder of fellow Black Panther Alex Rackley. Organizers wished to bring protests in support of Seale to New Haven. Other groups demonstrating against racial and gender inequality and the Vietnam War added their causes to this target protest. Between 20,000 and 30,000 demonstrators descended on the campus of Yale on May 1st. A pro-active Yale administration, along with local and federal law enforcement agencies had prepared for the scenario. Demonstrators were allowed to march and speak with no confrontation or conflict from the authorities. Peacefully, for the most part, Yale was without incident in what could have become a volatile event. Unfortunately, as the weekend passed, events across the nation would not have the same outcome.



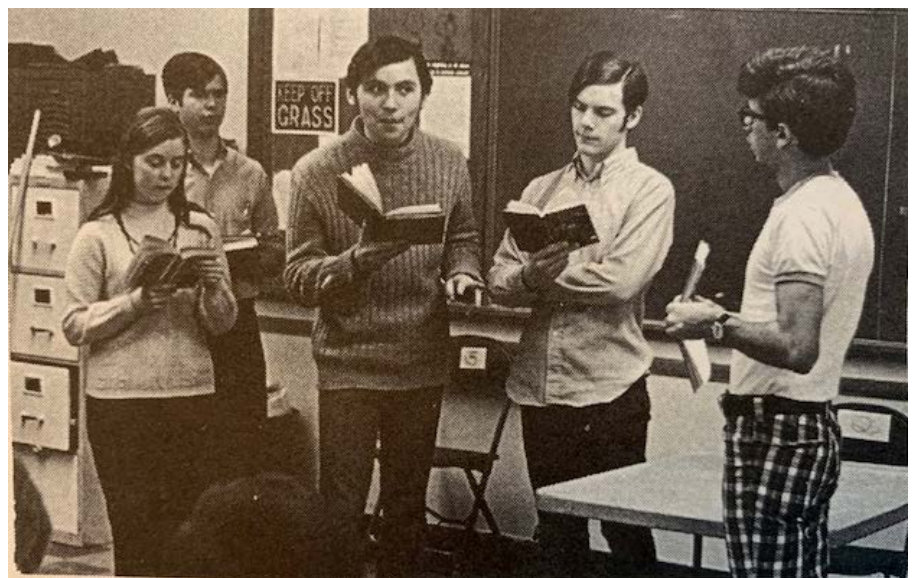
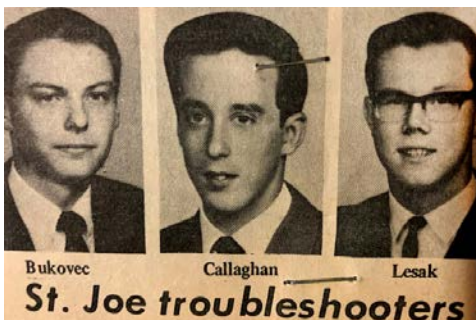
On the campus of St. Joseph High School during this transitional week of April into May, students entered the midterm of the fourth academic quarter. Seniors were lining up plans for post graduation and spring extra-curricular activities were reaching a crescendo. Coaches Terry Thomas and Dan Gillespie had a full slate of baseball games this week. A 2-1 loss to Padua doomed the diamond men in Crown Conference play. However, pitcher Bob Sakenes notched a milestone fourteen strikeouts in a 6-5 victory over Cleveland JFK. Coach Frank Passarella’s golf team completed a nine of eleven victory string in match play. Seniors Bob Clark, Jim Booms and Pat Brophy had been playing well for the team. Unfortunately, St. Edward and Padua had defeated the linksters in conference play. Coach John Tigue’s tennis team had turned a corner in finding itself. This week the netters completed a five game victory streak. Seniors Joe Calabrese and Larry Dezman became contributors adding depth to the team, led by senior Peter Fries.



In professional sports, the St. Louis Blues defeated the Pittsburgh Penguins in a six game series. This set up the NHL championship series against the Boston Bruins. In the NBA, the New York Knicks were in a tug-of-war against the L.A. Lakers. By week's end the title series was tied at two games apiece. On May 2nd, in Louisville, Kentucky, "Dust Commander" with Mike Manganello in the jockey stirrups was victorious. This 96th "Run for the Roses" was also noted by the first female jockey, Diane Crump, to take the reins of a contestant.



It was athletics, arts and autos that dominated the first weekend of May for the Viking faithful. Track coach John Gasparek praised his team's performance as "the best of the season" as his trackmen captured third place in the highly competitive Euclid Relays. St. Joe placed in ten of sixteen events in the ten team meet. Striking gold was the shuttle relay squad, Jim Stanley in the 2-mile run and Chuck Moore with a shot put toss of 54'3". Drama Club moderator John McMahon was equally as proud, with his club's presentation of "A Man for All Seasons." Jerry Cirino performed the lead as Thomas More. Seniors Jim Guy and Ken Kampman were also in the cast. Five performances hit the Viking stage the first two weekends of May. Finally, Viking pride to the third degree was celebrated by Mr. Ray Golick and his automotive trouble shooters. In the late 60's, St. Joseph's industrial arts program had become widely regarded for its quality. It was highly competitive, even against the specialized public vocational education programs. In automotives, Plymouth sponsored an area-wide competition in trouble shooting automobile issues. The 1970 team of Mike Bukovec, Gary Callaghan and Richard Lesch passed through the qualifying competition. Against the twenty best vocational schools in northeast Ohio the team took fourth. As the month of May ascended onto the calendar, the legacy of excellence continued to be written in the halls of St. Joseph High.



Left to Right: Cindy Guy, Terry Shaw, Tom Rankin, Jerry Brandich and Jerry Cirino rehearse for "Man for All Seasons."