

Being in the Band

By Jim Krovontka

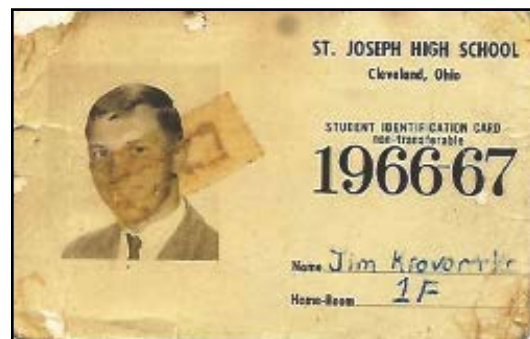
Editor's note: If there ever was a collector of memories, Jim is KING! It has taken me weeks to extract all the images Jim has saved over the years and lay them out here for you. Thanks Jim!

At the ripe old age of nine, my sister, a student at Villa Angela, took me to see an operetta. I have no idea what the plot of "The Red Mill" was about. I don't even remember if there was any singing involved. But what I do remember was these two guys, Kid Conner and Con Kidder. The following year she said that we were going to a musical. Yeah, that's what I said. What's a musical? It just happened to be "The Music Man" at St Joe's. I even knew one of the actresses. She sat in front of me in school and played Amaryllis, Marian Paroo's piano student. Nonetheless, I was hooked. I fell in love with musicals and especially music.

Fast forward to March 5, 1965. My parents received a letter saying that I was accepted to attend St Joseph High School. While my parents and I were planning my freshman schedule, I noticed a class called Cadet Band. Somehow, I was able to convince my parents to let me learn how to play a band instrument. Problem was, they couldn't afford a new instrument, so I picked the tuba (sousaphone to be exact) since the school owned those.

The 1966-67 school year started with a bang. The locker that I had been assigned turned out to also have been assigned to another student. He won, so I was reassigned a locker in the eastern corridor on the third floor. My 1-F homeroom was west of the main stairway and my first three classes were all in the west corridor. So I couldn't get back to my locker until after third period. Then came cadet band. Mr Novak had the patience of Job teaching 50 guys how to play band instruments. Somehow I learned to play the sousaphone. Not very well, but I learned how to play.

I wasn't what you'd call an A student. But I did pass to my sophomore year. Even with Fr Reich telling me to never take Latin





again and Mr Howard asking questions in Latin in his English classes. But there were a lot of pluses to my freshman year. Things like Football Games, the Mid-Year Band Concert and “South Pacific” (with Barb Turk and Tom Warner).

At the end of summer, the band members assembled at Camp Perry for band camp. This was not a relaxing camp. We learned how to march (ten steps to five yards), raise those knees, practice, learn the college fight songs, practice, learn the different formations, practice and of course learn “The Saints”.

The time had finally come. I was now a sophomore. And more importantly, a member of the Senior Band. My homeroom, 5-B, was in the cafeteria as well as my locker.

But, what could be more important than all that. Well it starts at home, when you don that Columbia Blue uniform, white bucks (shoes and make sure they're polished), white gloves and head for St Joe's to pick up a hat and plume (sousaphone players did not have plumes in their hats) and get on the bus to head over to Euclid High School. And then it happens. Dennis Eckart's voice booms over the loud-speaker, “Now Entering, From The North End Of The Field, The St Joseph High School Marching Band.”



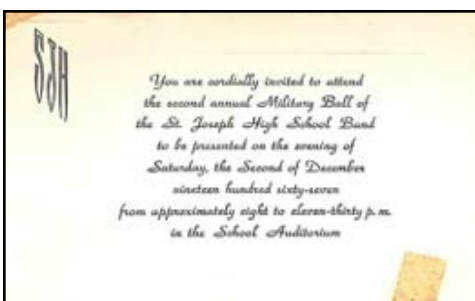
Mr Srp did double duty trying desperately to teach me how to type and also everything I needed to know about Biology. And Mr Macuga, my favorite teacher in my four years, taught me about Geometry.

The rest of sophomore year had events like the Military Ball where bands from other schools are invited to join our band in refreshments and a dance, The Winter Concert and “Half a Sixpence” starring Joe Dougherty. Trivia question: What is the last line of “Half a Sixpence?” Arthur Kipps talking to His Wife Anne: “There Never Was A Fellow Quite Like Me Before”.

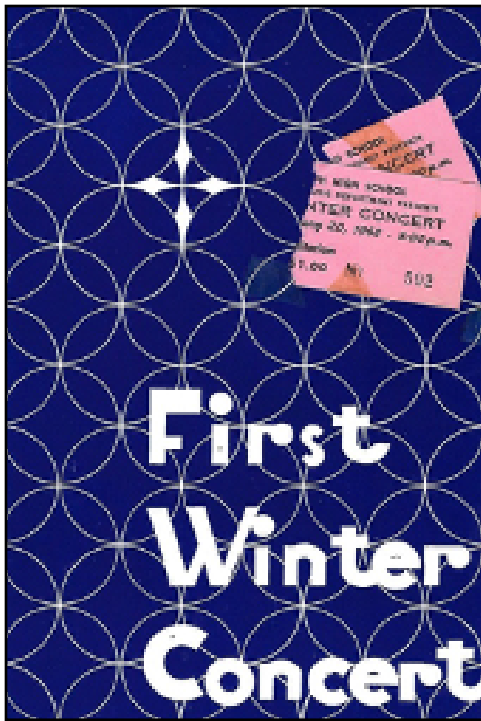


During the year, I challenged one of the Symphonic Band Sousaphone players for his seat and beat him out to move from the Senior Band to the Symphonic Band. I found you don't have to be in sports to letter.

Summer meant Driver Training and getting my license. Also, to my mother's dismay, I bought my first car for \$25 from a fellow band member. It was a 1959 Ford Galaxie 500 with no reverse. Every morning I had to get up before my dad and push my car out of the driveway so he could go to work.



All of a sudden, it's junior year. We were the veterans at band camp. We designated Rob and Ray Turk's House for just about everything we did. Get together after every football game, flower-making parties (Homecoming Float) and anything else worth gathering for.



I had Mr Macuga again this year for Algebra II. I found a real passion in an Electricity class with Mr Pelton. Building and repairing radios has been something I enjoy to this day. Owning a number of antique radios and gramophones, I'm trying to share the knowledge I've gained with my son.

1968-1969 was an exciting year for the band. Mike Pausic became the Junior Drum Major and Pete Ciofani became announcer for football games and master of ceremonies for concerts.

The Junior class made a float for the cheerleaders to ride on. It takes a lot of flowers for a float. So we had a lot of people pitch in, at Turk's house, of course.

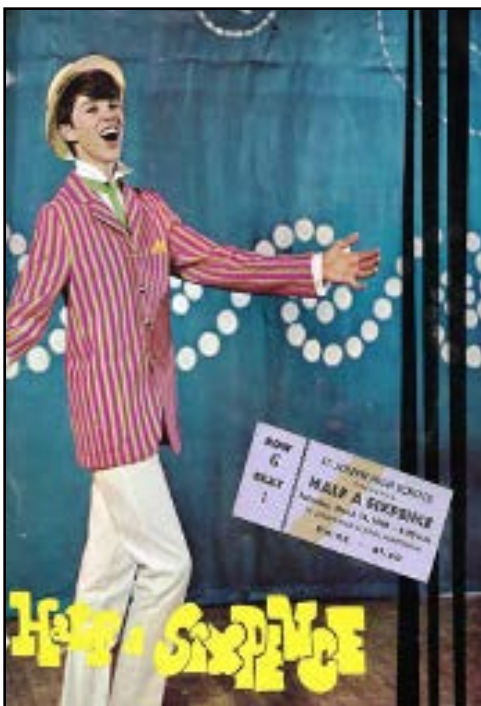
Not only did we march at all the football games, including our Homecoming Game with Queen Ruta Jokubaitis, but we had to take time to attend the Homecoming Dance and the Cleveland Heights Marching Band Military Ball.

To end 1968, we were invited to be the halftime entertainment at the Cleveland Browns game versus the New York Giants at Cleveland Municipal Stadium along with our boy's chorus. The greatest announcement of all was that we were invited to New York City for the St Patrick's Day Parade.

Besides the Senior Band and the Symphonic Band, the Stage Band also played a few numbers during the concert. These are the elite musicians from the bands. Two numbers that come to mind were Dennis Minnechello's trumpet solo on "By The Time I Get To Phoenix" that brought tears to almost everyone's eyes. The other is a Glenn Miller tune that our class kind of made our own. This one is "In The Mood".

That was followed a week later by our Military Ball.

Ellen Foley was the junior representative with Ernie Brown as her escort. Next on the list was the musical "Carousel". St Patrick's Day was approaching and we needed to fund our trip. The band raffle was one way.



We reached our goal and the day finally arrived. For most of us, it was our first time on a plane. We left Cleveland Hopkins Airport in a terrific thunder storm on March 17. We landed at Newark Airport in New Jersey and were bussed to our hotel, the Times Square Motor Hotel. If you hung far enough out the window, you could actually see Times Square. Another bit of trivia: Times Square is really a triangle.

Time to get into uniform and back on the buses to get to the parade. As we got into uniform, we were able to watch the beginning of the parade on TV. Arriving at our assigned starting position, we got into parade formation and began the march. And we marched and we





marched and we marched. This was by far the longest parade we ever marched in. In fact, we got back on the busses, returned to the hotel and watched the end of the parade on TV. Truly incredible.

During the next couple days, we had a number of tours that Mr Novak had set up for us ahead of time. We toured the United Nations Building, the observation deck of the Empire State Building, Chinatown, Radio City Music Hall (with a full movie and music program and the "Rockettes") and the NBC building (including an old time radio program show).



We were told that if we wanted to roam around on our own, to make sure we had a chaperon with us. So, of course, that would be a challenge. Ever hear of a ticker-tape parade?? Well this is ticker tape. Direct from Wall Street. However, Wall Street was off limits, but did that stop us. We entered the Stock Exchange building and walked over to the elevators. And then it happened. The door opened and there was a group of band members. The first question was "who's your chaperone?" Fortunately, neither of us had a chaperone. So now you know the rest of the story.



And then there's the subway token. There aren't many places you can go in New York City without riding on the subway. But did you know that it goes all the way to Coney Island? Of course it's off limits, but did that stop us? What stopped us was coming back at midnight and getting off at the wrong stop. As we ran up the stairs to street level, the gate clanged closed behind us for the night. We had no idea where we were. We stopped a man on the street and asked how to get back to our hotel and he pointed out that we were still about ten blocks away and had to get back on the subway. That was two blocks away and we had to run as it was closing. We finally got back and snuck into the hotel without detection. I guess that's the rest of the story.

Sadly we had to pack, get on the buses and head back to the airport. Time to head for home.



About a week later, I was looking at the bulletin board in the band room that contained a map of New York City with the boundaries marked on it. Mr Novak came up and said "see all the places you could have visited."

So back to reality. We closed out our junior year with the Spring Concert and then marching in the Euclid Memorial Day parade and our Junior Prom.

I received my second year band letter.

Even during the summer, the talented students of St Joes and all the girls schools around, work on acting and musicals thanks to Mr Dan Pournaras.



The band year started in August with our annual visit to Camp Perry for band camp.

Ed Zivkovich was our “during the week” cheerleader. He created almost all of our buttons and badges rooting for the Vikings over their opponents. And he seemed to create his own language too. “Skabotchy The Irish”?? What the heck is Skabotchy?? I wish I had kept that one.

Being seniors, we needed a place to meet privately and study and make plans. Did you know that in the rear of the band room there is a storage room for cases and instruments? But there is another room attached to the equipment room that has always been locked. Somehow, we convinced Brother Gerry that room might be a good meeting room for us. So with Brother Gerry’s blessing the infamous “Back Room” was created, including a stereo system and a refrigerator that was also locked. After twisting Brother Gerry’s arm just a little more, we started using the room for lunches and just laying around listening to music.



The St Joseph Viking Football Team was chosen to play at Cleveland Municipal Stadium against the St Edward Eagle Football Team in the second game of a double-header for the Crown Conference Championship. The East-West Senate Championship Game was the first game.

In December the band was selected to be the Halftime entertainment of the Cleveland Browns versus the Green Bay Packers game.

Following football season, we hosted the 4th annual Military Ball. My own girlfriend, Lynn Rosa, was voted the Queen of the Ball.

The year 1970 began with the Winter Band Concert and was followed by this year’s musical.

The year came to an end with our Spring Concert and our senior class raffle. I looked at this photo a number of times. I just couldn’t get over a 1970 Mercury Cougar or \$3,000.00???



I even lettered in Library Club.

As my senior year comes to a close, I sadly cannot remember any of my teachers except for Mr Novak, of course, and Mr Pelton, who I did a special electricity project with. In fact, I fully intended to take Electrical Engineering in college, but sitting in the waiting room of my advisor, I picked up a brochure that said Data Processing. So that sounded really good so I switched my major then and there.

The first week of June was filled with a lot of excitement and anticipation. First, we all gathered at St William’s Church in Euclid for our



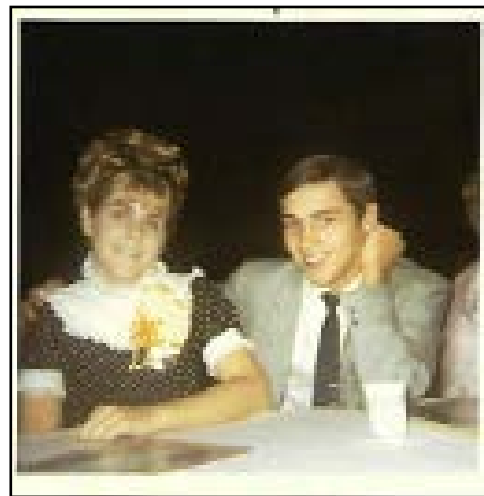
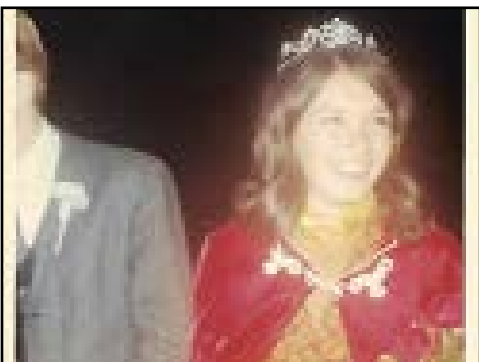
Baccalaureate Mass. That was followed the next day with our graduation at Cleveland Music Hall.

The last item as seniors is the Senior Prom

The Al Serafina Orchestra stepped aside and gave our members of the stage band an opportunity to play "In The Mood" one last time.

I really can't believe over our four years the number of formal or semi-formal dance we dragged these poor girls to. And they had to keep getting different dresses for each event.

My son, Matthew, attended St Peter Chanel High School in Bedford and decided to join the Cadet Band. He played the sousaphone and had Mr Novak as his teacher. Coincidence??





Christmas Eve 1968

MUST PAY OWN WAY

Viking Band Gets Invite to New York St. Patty's Parade

Christmas is just around the corner, but the 169-member St. Joseph High marching band is dreaming about St. Patrick's Day.

Last Friday, band director Neem Novak received an official invitation for the Viking musicians to March in the New York St. Patty's Day Parade.

"THERE IS only one problem. They have to pay their way to the big town.

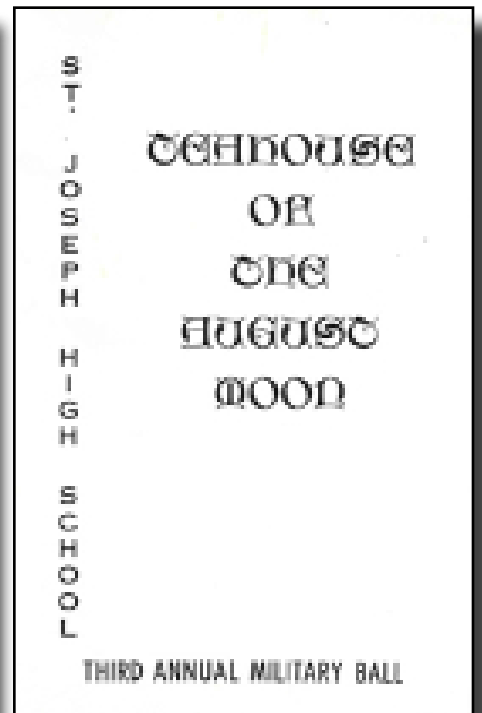
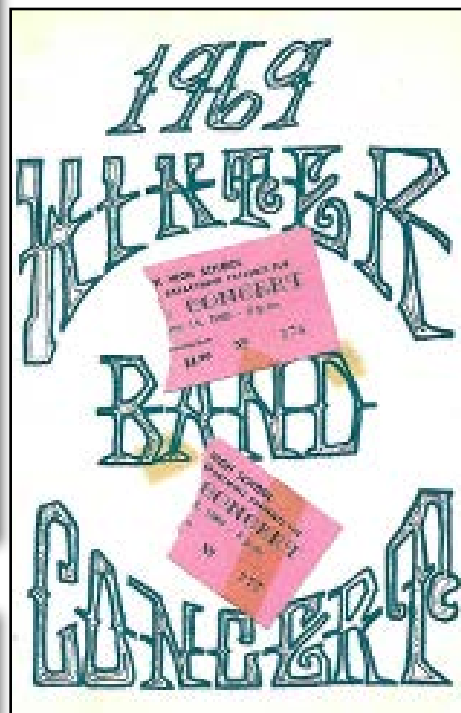
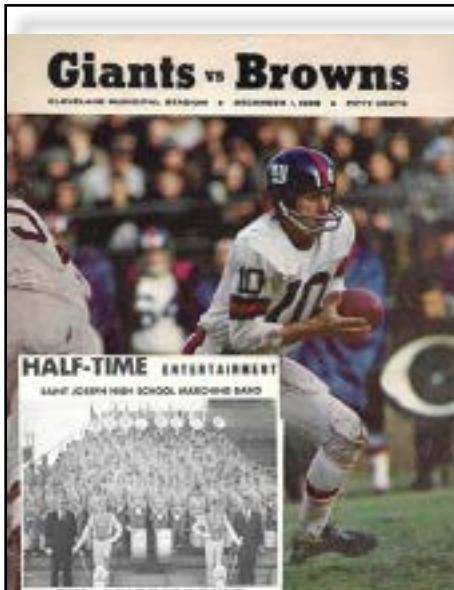
"We plan to take a jet flight from Cleveland on March 17," Novak said.

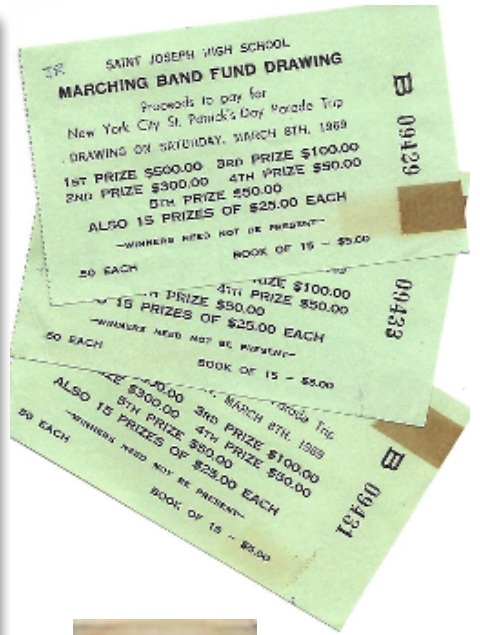
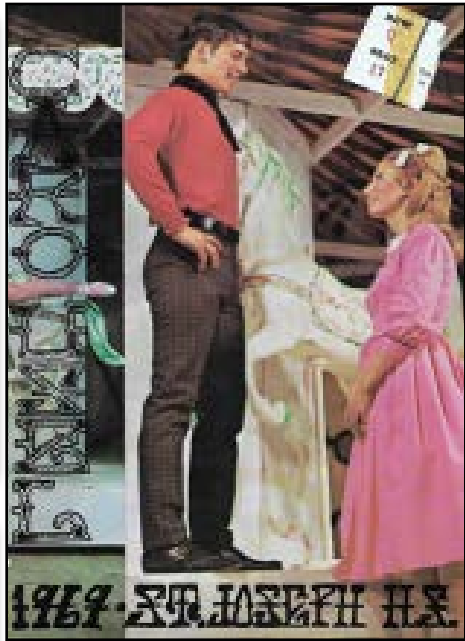
Air fare will come to about \$85 per band member.

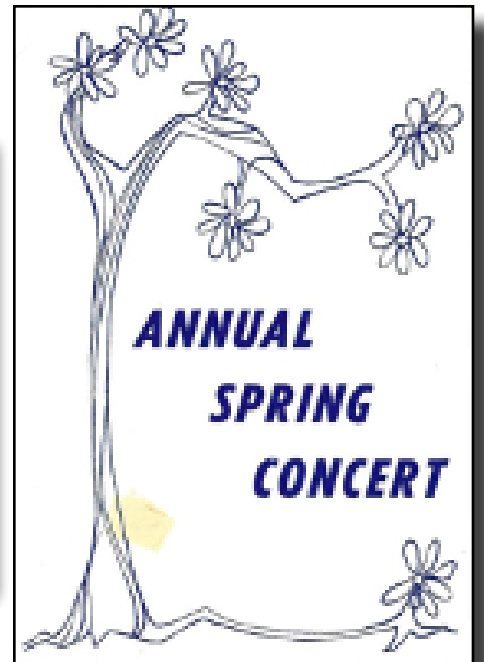
This week, band members launched an effort to raise expense money. The Viking band appeared in the New York Parade three years ago, paying its way with profits from a school raffle.

THIS TIME, they are selling tickets for a drawing sponsored by St. Peter & Paul Church in Struthers, O. First prize is a new car. Second place winner gets \$500 and there are twenty \$100 prizes.

While in New York, the band will make side trips to the United Nations Building, NBC, Radio City and the Empire State building.









DAN POURNARAS
PRESENTS HIS
LAKE SHORE MUSICAL THEATRE
IN
**BYE
BYE
BIRDIE**

PRODUCED AND STAGED BY
DANIEL T. POURNARAS

MUSICAL DIRECTORS: KEN MAKO
FRAN SAUER

CHORAL DIRECTION: KEN MAKO
GREG NOWAK

CHOREOGRAPHERS:
MARY ANN MURRIDGE
GARY BERARDINELLI

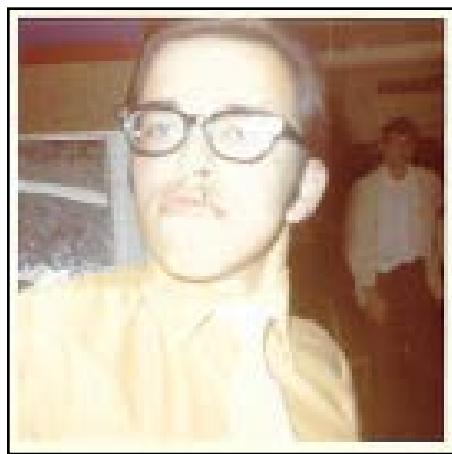
BROADWAY MUSICAL COMEDY
Music by Charles Strouse - Book by Michael Stewart
Lyrics by Lee Adams

Presented at St. Joseph High School, August 1, 2008, 10, 1988

"BYE BYE BIRDIE" PRODUCED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH
TAMM-WITMARR MUSIC LIBRARY INC., New York City, New York



The Junior Class
of Saint Joseph High School
presents
"TRACES"
featuring
THE CHARADES
Friday evening
June thirteenth
~Nineteen hundred sixty-nine





CLEVELAND BROWNS VS. GREEN BAY PACKERS

HALF-TIME ENTERTAINMENT

ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

The St. Joseph High School Marching Band is proud to be the featured act at the Cleveland Browns vs. Green Bay Packers game. The band will perform during the half-time entertainment. The band is made up of students from St. Joseph High School and is directed by Mr. [Name]. The band has been performing for many years and is proud to be part of the Cleveland Browns vs. Green Bay Packers game. The band will perform during the half-time entertainment. The band is made up of students from St. Joseph High School and is directed by Mr. [Name]. The band has been performing for many years and is proud to be part of the Cleveland Browns vs. Green Bay Packers game.

1969 HOMECOMING

ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL

SOUVENIR
25c
PROGRAM

First High School
Gold Twin Bill

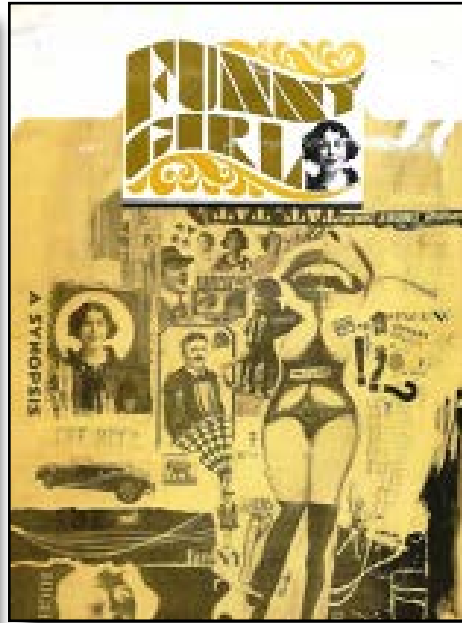
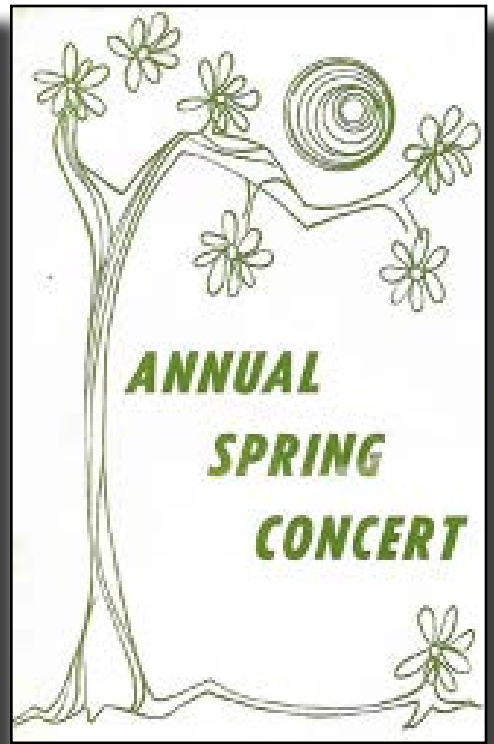
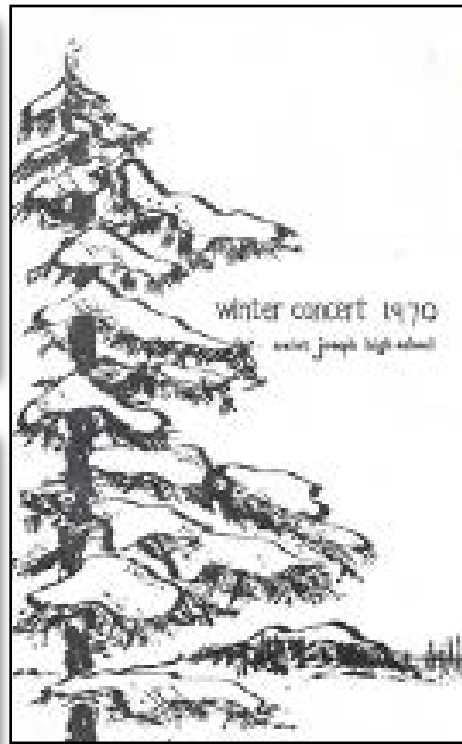
Cleveland
Stadium

NOVEMBER 15th

1969 CHARITY GAME
1st Game—EAST vs WEST SENATE
CITY CHAMPIONSHIP
2nd Game—ST. EDWARD vs ST. JOSEPH
CROWN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP



Fourth Annual Military Ball
 sponsored by
 The Saint Joseph High School
 Marching Band
 in the School Auditorium
 on December 22nd, 1969
 from 8:30 to 11:30 p. m.
 \$4.00 per couple



St. Joseph High School
SENIOR CLASS RAFFLE
PRIZE: 1970 MERCURY COUGAR
OR
\$3,000 IN CASH
 Dealer Dollars include a 327 V8 Engine, 10-Block Motor, Twin carburetor dual headlights, 10-ported Turn Signals, Electric windows, Gauges, dual horn, 4-wheel disc brakes, 2000 cc. engine, Power Steering, Radio and Electric Wind Controls. Color: Maroon with Black Stripes.
 The Car is being displayed at K & S Lincoln-Mercury Dealers
 2823 Euclid Avenue, Willsoughby
DRAWING TO BE HELD MAY 2, 1970 AT ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL
 Winner need not be present
 Non-Profit Organization: Donation 25¢ each \$2.00 a book
 Drawing to be held May 2, 1970 at St. Joseph High School
 Winner need not be present
 Non-Profit Organization: Donation 25¢ each \$2.00 a book
 Drawing to be held May 2, 1970 at St. Joseph High School
 Winner need not be present
 Non-Profit Organization: Donation 25¢ each \$2.00 a book



The Family and Senior Class
 of
 Saint Joseph High School
 cordially invite
 you to the
 Commencement Exercises
 Friday evening June 12th
 Sixteen hundred seventy
 eight school
 Music Hall
 Public Auditorium

ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL
 SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL
 COMMENCEMENT

ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL
 GRADUATION EXERCISES
 Music Hall, Cleveland Public Auditorium
 Friday, June 5, 1970 7:30 P.M.

FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 1970
 8:00 P.M.
 MUSIC HALL, CLEVELAND PUBLIC AUDITORIUM



THE ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL
SENIOR PROM

*Featuring - Al Serafini
and his Orchestra*

STATLER HILTON

280

7:30 to 12:00

