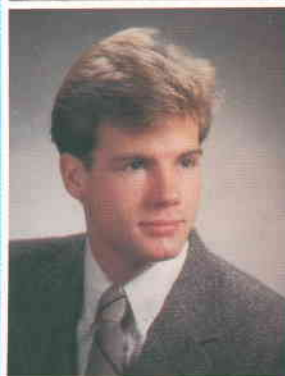


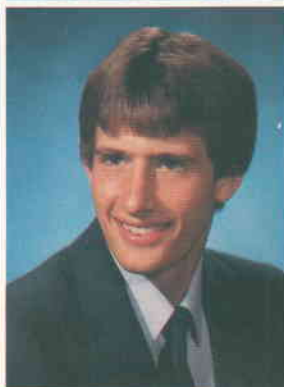
Heidi Scranton
Melody Sevenski
Cyndi Shaul
Stephanie Shelton



Michael Shinn
Sherry Shinn
Cindy Shoemaker
Tricia Shoemaker



Karen Simon
Craig Sira
Steve Sjoberg
Connie Skorna



EARLY GRADUATION STUDENTS PURSUE A LONG AWAITED DREAM

A traditional graduation at St. Johns High School would consist of walking across the stage on a sunny June day to accept that long awaited diploma. For two seniors, the tradition has been altered. Velvet Atkinson and Diane Stratton decided to accept their diplomas in mid-January in hopes of pursuing a career with their horses. Diane and Velvet have been riding horses through 4-H most of their lives and now have recently involved themselves in a horse show which could take them all over the United States. As Velvet stated, "We will be traveling all over Michigan, also to the bordering states and possibly to Canada." Most students, after

graduation, are still under the wings of their parents, yet Diane and Velvet will be staying "at hotels near the showing grounds."

The thing that frightens Velvet the most about her choice of graduating early and entering a traveling horse show is she doesn't know if she is ready. "It's a big step and a full time job."

Graduating early is a unique twist to end senior year. Diane and Velvet had to discuss the situation with their parents a great deal. Once the decision was made, they took the idea to their counselors and a few of the administrators, and discussed it further. One action the two girls had to take was move the

required economics and government classes to the same semester. Also they had to prove to the administrators that they wanted to graduate early in order to pursue a career.

The two girls will be together most of the time because they have the same horse trainer. Though being together will ease the loneliness, the girls both agree that "friends" are what they will miss the most about their high school years.

Although graduating early is unusual, for Diane and Velvet it is something they both wanted to do.