

NEPA's own Sinatra

By Denise Allabaugh
The Sunday Voice

Attorney Mark Mack is often called "Pennsylvania's very own Sinatra" and "the singing attorney"

By day, Mack is a criminal defense lawyer. By night, he enjoys taking music lessons with Maestro Giacomo Simonelli and practicing with his new band, Mark Mack and Company.

He decided to create his own band after singing several years with the Marty Edwards Organization.

In addition to Sinatra music, Mack croons swing and jazz music of Bobby Darin and Dean Martin. He performs these classics of the past every Saturday night at 8 at Billy G's Restaurant, 216 River St., Wilkes-Barre.

Mack has been listening to these late legendary jazz performers since he was very young.

"I've been singing since I was a kid," Mack said. "I've always loved to sing. There's no question about it."

Mack said his greatest inspirations have been his parents. His father, Thomas Mack, was district attorney for Luzerne County from 1964 to 1968. His mother, Patricia Mack, was an opera singer.

He and his family often traveled to New York City on the weekends to listen to jazz performers.

"My dad always loved this type of music himself and when we would be

going places, he would be singing it," Mack said.

Mack wears classic style suits from the 1950s and 1960s when he sings. He gets many requests for tunes such as "New York, New York," "Summer Wind" and "The Way You Look Tonight."

"Sinatra did over 1,400 songs and what made him so great were the songs he selected to do. Many are from old Broadway shows," Mack noted.

Mack recently made his second trip to Italy, where he joined Maestro Giacomo in Rome and performed live in concert.

He also traveled to Cancun, Mexico, where he celebrated his 50th birthday at the Casa Rolandi's Restaurant with restaurateur Mirko Bignotti and actor Armand Assante. He has been in touch with Assante and his nephew, Marco, and may visit them in California.

"He's a great guy," Mack said of Assante. "I was always a big fan. For me, it was a thrill to meet him."

Mack dedicated his first CD, titled "In the Glare of the Spotlight," to his sister, Marlena, who died in 1999 from ovarian cancer. Funds raised from the sale of the CD were donated to the Gilda Radner Ovarian Cancer Society.

His second CD, titled "Mack the Knife," is scheduled for release in November. Since Mack likes to scuba dive, he plans to donate proceeds from this CD sale to the Oceanic Coral Reefs

UPCOMING SHOWS

Mark Mack will perform at the Pittston Tomato Festival Sunday, Aug. 22, at 6:30 p.m.; an anniversary celebration at Billy G's Restaurant in Wilkes-Barre Wednesday, Aug. 25, at 7:30 p.m., and Scranton Italian Festival on Saturday, Sept. 4, at 4 p.m.

Preservation Society.

His new band members consist of Ron Stabinski on keyboards, Rob Burns on drums, and Joe Michaels on bass. All are graduates of music schools.

Recently, they held fund-raisers for the Osterhout Library in Wilkes-Barre and to help revitalize downtown Wilkes-Barre.

Joe Nardone, owner of the Gallery of Sound, and the F.M. Kirby Center in Wilkes-Barre have been sponsors of Mack and his band.

Mack will be the grand finale of the Pittston Tomato Festival on Sunday, Aug. 22 at 6:30 p.m. He will perform at the Scranton Italian Festival on Saturday, Sept. 4 at 4 p.m.

He also will perform for Billy G's anniversary celebration on Wednesday, Aug. 25, beginning at 7:30 p.m. For reservations, call 826-1101.

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