

Elmira Junior High Proposal Is Shelved for Time Being

By ALEX MacDONALD

Elmira — The long-argued proposal to establish a Catholic junior high school here next September died last weekend.

A combination of facts and forces which could not be resolved this Spring, contributed to the demise of the proposal at least for the time being, according to pastors and parish school board members.

Decisions by the four parishes involved, St. Patrick's, St. Cecilia's, St. Anthony's and SS. Peter and Paul, not to consolidate their 7th and 8th grades were reported on Feb. 1 to Sister Mary Agnes, coordinator of the Elmira area Catholic schools for the Chemung county Catholic School Board.

"The parents of prospective junior high students have been strong for the plan right from the beginning," Sister Mary Agnes said, "but the pro-

longed and complicated debate over the budget required for the school has divided the parish school boards."

An initial survey of some 170 families in the four parishes who might be sending children to the Catholic junior high indicated that 139 parents wanted the new facility, she said.

The implication was clear that the problem of providing some \$42,000 to \$60,000 for the first year's operation of the proposed school, had led to a negative vote by the parish school boards.

Parents and boards were unwilling to face the necessity of levying some tuition on the future junior high schoolers. Parish school finances, already troublesome, would be threatened by the need for new collections.

The first proposal had been to establish the new school in the St. Anthony's parochial school building with a possible maximum attendance of 270 pupils from six Elmira parishes, a faculty of 10 and a first-year operational cost of \$61,450.

When two parishes withdrew from that proposal, it was hoped that the school might operate for \$42,000 if it had an enrollment of 180 students.

St. Anthony's suggested that the school be shifted to St. Patrick's whose 12 rooms could accommodate its own elementary grades and the junior high students.

Under tentative plans St. Patrick's and St. Anthony's would assume \$14,000 each of the budget with the remaining \$14,000 split between Sts. Peter and Paul's and St. Cecilia's.

Father Edward Foy of St. Cecilia's stated: "The defective budget arrangement and the personnel plan killed the Junior High in our mind. But we will be agreeable to cooperate in any future, more feasible program."

Spokesmen at St. Anthony's said: "A broader basis of financial support is needed if we are to have a Junior High. The people of St. Anthony's will continue to operate an 8-grade school for the foreseeable future."

Both Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCafferty and diocesan superintendent of schools, Monsignor William M. Roche have publicly favored consolidation of the 7th and 8th graders of the Elmira parishes and have supported the work of Sister Mary Agnes in planning the proposed Junior High.



ROCHESTER CALLING BOLIVIA — John L. Sullivan (right), of Greece, amateur radio "ham", tunes in another "ham" in La Paz, Bolivia, so that Father Peter Deckman (left), at home on vacation, can talk with priests at the Rochester Diocesan Mission with whom he has been serving in Bolivia. Sullivan has made it possible frequently for Father Deckman, who will return to La Paz about Feb. 10, to talk with the other Rochester priests there, Fathers Paul Freemesser and Edward Golden.

Bolivia Tuned In

'Ham' Brings World Together

By ARTHUR P. FARREN

Sit in front of a "ham radio mike" in the Rochester area some day and have a lengthy chat with the priests serving at the Rochester Diocesan Mission in La Paz, Bolivia — nearly 6,000 miles away.

This "modern magic" occurs frequently in the home of John L. Sullivan, 245 Berkshire Dr., Greece.

Through Sullivan's good offices and equipment, one of the Rochester priests assigned to the Bolivian mission — Father Peter Deckman, currently vacationing at his Rochester home — talked for more than an hour last Saturday afternoon with Father Paul Freemesser near La Paz.

The third priest serving there, Father Edward Golden, was not in the area at the time.

The magic of "ham radio" contact on Saturday included two other occurrences:

• A Rochester, Minn., "ham" entered the frequency — and the Rochester, N.Y., participants listened for several minutes while Father Freemesser talked with his twin brother in Minnesota, Father George Freemesser, CSB, a Basilian priest studying psychology at the famed Mayo Clinic.

• A young Puerto Rican seminarian in La Paz talked with his mother in Paterson, N.J., from Bolivian radio to Sullivan's radio here, then via a "patch-in" connection through Sullivan's telephone to the telephone in the Paterson home.

After several minutes' chat, the mother signed off with "May the Holy Virgin be with you, my son." (Translation to English by Father Deckman.)

Talking with radio buffs literally around the world, and with many ships at sea, is nothing new for Sullivan. He's been doing it since he first became interested in 1938. On the wall is a large "Amateur Radio Map of the World" dotted with pins in countries around the globe marking staling with which he has had contact.

Sullivan, one of several hundred members of the Rochester Amateur Radio Association (RARA), is licensed under "call letters" WB-2-KBT.

Father Freemesser — who said the priests get the Courier-Journal regularly — was pleased to receive by radio the latest word on the conditions of Father Nicholas Alletto and Father James Russell, both still recovering from effects of an accidental carbon monoxide tragedy at St. Anthony of Padua rectory here.

Father Deckman, at home with his family at 268 Genesee St. for the first time since he left for Bolivia more than two years ago, asked Father Freemesser what he should take back with him when he returns to La Paz about Feb. 10.

"Well," was the reply, "besides money, would you please bring me some cigars?"

Laymen's Meeting

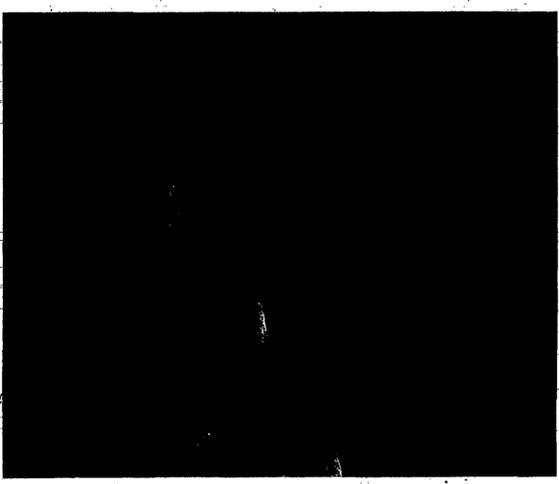
200 Hear John Leo

More than 200 persons attended a talk by New York City newspaperman John Leo at St. John Fisher College Jan. 30. It was sponsored by the recently formed Rochester Association of Catholic Laymen.

Admitting that "I am as confused as you are," Leo delivered a caustic, clever-turn-of-phrase criticism of the Church, the Pope and most of the Bishops, which seemed to please the majority of listeners but also appeared to disturb and dismay others.

The lively Leo felt, "no longer find a sense of security in religion," and have not as yet been able to establish "a true sense of community." He expects it will take "10 to 20 years before groups like yours will scrape away the barnacles . . . and establish some sort of non-clerical Catholic culture in America."

Leo said he no longer attends Sunday Mass regularly, "saying he couldn't find many 'meaningful Masses' in his New York neighborhood."



BACK FROM BOLIVIA — Mrs. Amelia McWilliams (right) and her daughter, Mrs. Richard Wisniewski, returned to Rochester last week after winning a prize contest trip to the Rochester Diocesan Mission in La Paz, Bolivia. Mrs. McWilliams wears an "Inca sun god" medallion souvenir, while her daughter donned a handmade 100 per cent alpaca wool poncho.

Just Back from Bolivia, They Tell of Its Poverty

"You just can't imagine that kind of poverty until you see it."

This was the principal reaction of a mother and daughter who returned to Rochester last week after a 10-day trip to the Rochester Diocesan Mission in La Paz, Bolivia.

They are Mrs. Amelia McWilliams, 216 Merriman St., Rochester, of Corpus Christi parish, and her daughter, Mrs. Richard Wisniewski, 146 Parkmeadow Dr., Pittsford, of Good Shepherd parish.

They won the trip when Mrs. McWilliams' name was drawn last autumn from a list of fund donors to the mission. The fund-raising effort, which realized approximately \$15,000, was sponsored by relatives and friends of the Rochester priests serving in La Paz.

Theme of the fund drive here was "5¢ for a brick for La Paz." The money was loaned by the mission to establish a "co-op" among some 40 Indian peasant families, and a brick-producing business set up by them is now in operation.

Currently serving at the Rochester-staffed parish, located in a slum-hill area at the city's edge, are Fathers Peter Deckman, Paul Freemesser and Edward Golden.

Mrs. McWilliams and her daughter stayed at a Maryknoll Nuns' convent a few minutes' drive from the adobe rectory. They were driven around the parish — comprising some 40,000 souls — in the parish jeep by a young seminarian who served as interpreter.

Both said they became very ill, with severe headaches, during their first few hours in La Paz, which is 13,000 feet above sea level. Even after getting somewhat used to the altitude, they found that they had to walk very slowly, stopping every few minutes.

"We did quite a bit of walking," Mrs. McWilliams said, "because there are very few roads — just a series of paths up hills."

"And what a lot of mud," Mrs. Wisniewski added, pointing out that they were there during the three-month "rainy season."

Both particularly noted the lack of central heating in the mud-straw adobes. This would indicate, they said, why the people usually wear heavy clothing. And often the electricity for the entire neighborhood is shut off at 9 p.m. There are no television sets in the community, and no hot water.

Incidence of tuberculosis is rampant, with nearly half the children dying before the age of five.

With life and the economy as difficult as it is, Mrs. Wisniewski said, "some mothers pray that their children will die young."

With no hospital in the hills community, with doctors and superstition have prevailed. The priests have now opened a clinic next to the rectory, however, staffed by two doctors, a woman dentist, and a woman social worker, and the people have begun to put their confidence in them.

One thing the priests really would appreciate, said Mrs. Wisniewski, is mail from their friends at home. It is advisable, she added, not to send money through the mail, as not all mail reaches there regularly.

They may be addressed as follows: Parrigola De San Jose Obispo; Padres De Rochester; Casilla 4814; La Paz, Bolivia.

An overall impression of the trip? Replied Mrs. Wisniewski:

"The poverty is so bad that if I weren't married I would go down there to help them."

FAMILY NIGHT

Father P. David Flinck, episcopal vicar for the diocesan Office for Urban Ministry, will speak at the "winter" mission family night festival Sunday, Feb. 9, at Westminster Presbyterian Church Hall.

Father Alletto Still 'Critical'

One of two Rochester priests overcome by monoxide fumes Jan. 15 — Father Nicholas Alletto — remained in "critical" condition Wednesday in Genesee Hospital.

A hospital spokesman, with a cautious and guarded "appears to be improving," said Father Alletto was "breathing on his own, taking liquids, and has succeeded in communicating in a limited way with the professional staff and his family."

The other priest, Father James Russell, left St. Mary's Hospital Tuesday and is convalescing at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Russell, 940 Jay St.

Father Alletto is pastor and Father assistant at St. Anthony of Padua Church. They were victims of carbon monoxide poisoning which seeped into the rectory during the night from a car which accidentally had been left running in the attached garage.

Diocesan Educators To Hear Fr. Faricy

Religious and lay teachers from all the Catholic schools of the Rochester Diocese will gather at the Auditorium Theater on Monday, Feb. 10, for the annual Educational Conference of the Diocese of Rochester.

Father Robert Faricy, S.J., author of "Teilhard de Chardin's Theology of the Christian in the World," and member of the Commission of American Citizenship, Catholic University of America, will be the keynote speaker. Father Faricy's topic will be "What makes a school Catholic?" an investigation of the necessity of Catholic education in our society.

Featured speakers for the day in-

clude J. Alan Davitt, Executive Secretary, New York State Council of Catholic School Superintendents; Rt. Rev. Msgr. William M. Roche, Diocesan Superintendent of Schools; and John F. Wood, Genesee Valley School Development Association.

The day will cover the challenges to the Catholic school system and will explore creative experiments in education.

Following the conference in the Auditorium Theater, there will be a concelebrated Mass in Corpus Christi Church, Msgr. Albert P. Bartlett, rector of McQuaid Jesuit High School, will preach the homily.

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