

# When a Pair Of Schools Merge

By CECELIA VIGGO

Consolidation pays off, it seems, not only in "big business" but in education as well. At least, this has been the experience of two Rochester parochial schools.

This should be of special interest to members of the Educational Task Force, many of whose recommendations focused on the need for greater cooperation among parochial schools.

Last September, St. Lucy's School, with its 130 children in kindergarten through grade 4, merged with Immaculate Conception school, 10 blocks away, whose kindergarten and eight grades served 280 pupils.

Sister Barbara Fox, principal of the consolidation, finds heartening progress after the first semester of merger.

"We're pleased with what's happened so far, and will continue enthusiastically in the beginnings we've made," she said.

The union has permitted more efficient use of resources and personnel.

Sister Barbara explained that both St. Lucy and Immaculate had attempted to secure adequate collections of study materials, and to recruit good teachers.

Grouping more children at the same age level in their own school, and being able to combine teaching staffs, facilitated specialization within the schools.

"Team teaching" is one innovation merger has made possible.

Teachers especially strong in one academic area are able to work cooperatively with teachers particularly gifted in another field.

Consolidation also has fostered better use of the buildings. St. Lucy's was converted into an "Early Childhood Center" for 4, 5 and 6-year-olds. Since these primary and pre-primary children are centralized in one school, the building can respond to their unique needs.

St. Lucy's now abounds in little tables and chairs, and child-size bulletin boards, all to the delight of its pint-sized pupils.

Immaculate Conception occupies a building whose architecture lends itself to sectoring, thereby adequately separating its many grade levels.

Sister Barbara counted as another important change the fact that the schools can now offer "a continuous educational program from the 4-year-old level to junior high."

Before the merger, those fourth graders leaving St. Lucy's were dispersed into both public and parochial schools; now children move smoothly from one school to another.

All the advantages brought about by consolidation have culminated in the school's new non-graded programs.

The non-graded approach is similar to the interdepartmental organization of most secondary schools. A child is assigned to a "homeroom," supervised by one teacher. However, during



Sister Barbara Fox, S.S.J., left, principal of the combined Immaculate Conception-St. Lucy Schools, discusses plans for science and black history courses with Immaculate primary teachers, from left, Sister Geraldine Schultz, Mrs. Gaynelle Wethers, Sister Matilda Lahr, Miss Leslie Mallen.

the course of the school day, both teachers and students change classes.

There are several advantages to this program. The child profits by the talents and evaluation of several teachers, each specializing in an academic field.

Those children who need special attention in one subject can move easily from one learning level to another in the course of a school day. They are not hindered by strict grade divisions.

"Parents have been enthusiastic boosters of the merger and innovation," Sister Barbara said.

"But getting some of the kids to school has been a problem for many parents," she observed.

"Because the schools have not been able to secure federal funds for busing the children the 10-block distance between the schools, transportation has been largely the responsibility of the parents.

"Many of the younger children are able to ride to school, in car pools," she said, "because some parents are so determined. And four women from St. Thomas More parish on East Avenue drive for us."

Unlike most corporation mer-



Miss Michelle Mistretta, teacher of 4-year-old preschoolers attending St. Lucy's School, tells puppet story to youngsters. Pictured are Michelle Hunter, Valerie Griffin, Mark Hale, Ray Mobley, Rodney Walker, Jeffery Armstrong.

gers, the consolidation of the schools was not motivated by the expectation of financial gain. Although the two inner-city schools charge \$80 annual tuition per family, their overall operation still must be subsidized by diocesan funds given by all parishes.

Sister Barbara, however, feels that economics alone cannot measure the importance of the

Catholic school in the inner-city: there are ethical and social factors to be considered.

"Parochial schools started as a response to meeting not only the religious but also the cultural needs of immigrants.

"If the Church is to continue to be Christian," she added, "it must continue to respond to the needs of the people."

## On the Line

### People And Places

By Bob Considine



Old ex-presidents never die, more or less. Harry Truman was in a mood to fight anybody who wanted to keep him in the hospital until his colitis cleared up. Lyndon Johnson threw off his pneumonia like a trenchcoat and went swarming down to Acapulco.

Good to have them around kicking. More use should be made of them.

We don't appreciate ex-presidents properly. Both HST and LBJ ascended to the final rung of the political ladder through the death of their immediate superiors, Presidents Roosevelt and Kennedy. But each had to have a lot on the ball, great experience and superior integrity, to have been chosen vice president on those tickets and elected by the people.

But when it comes time to leave the White House an ex-president is as summarily dealt with as the Eskimos once dealt with their geriatrics problem: They put their old folks on an ice floe and set them adrift to die. We're not quite that callous, but sometimes it must seem so to former Presidents. Herbert Hoover, an unlucky man who became the scapegoat of a world Depression not of his making, was moved to grateful tears when — after years of enforced political purdah during Roosevelt's time — his unquestioned talent and advice were sought by Truman.

In turn, Truman was hurt by President Eisenhower, who had served under HST when Truman was commander-in-chief. According to the independent man from Independence, Mo., Ike never once asked him to the White House on business or socially.

President Nixon appointed Brig. Gen. Bob Schulz, Eisenhower's aide, to brief Messrs. Truman and Johnson periodically on classified matters. But this would appear to be a one-way street. The ex-presidents are told, not asked. At least, that would appear to be true.

They must know something, having done so much in their lifetime. But our society casts them out into exterior darkness, like Biblical pariahs. The same, generally, is true of our standard retirement practices. Corporations say, in effect, that a valuable employe's brain blows a fuse or his legs crumble at that split second when he is 65 — however much better he is than anybody else in the shop. We are equally cruel to the able-bodied and mentally alert middle-aged who seek work and have much to offer. Alan Shepard, entrusted by NASA with the breathtaking task of leading an expedition to the moon and back would be turned down if he applied for a ribbon clerk's job at Macy's. You see, he's 47.

Speaking of former President Johnson, it was guessed at in the public prints that he is embarrassed about wearing his new hearing aid. This was deduced from the fact that when twice asked about it by reporters, LBJ replied, "Good to see you again."

Maybe he was just tufted out. Bernard Baruch used to cut out frequently when he was bored by what he heard. His tormentors never knew because Barney would keep nodding pleasantly. Bugs Baer said that Baruch did it so often he came down with a severe case of affirmative palsy.

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