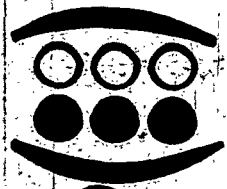


Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons



"The parish next to us is changing," writes a reader. "Many people in our parish are worried that our parish will change, too. I'd like to bring the matter up at our parish council meeting, but I don't have any constructive suggestions to offer."

Every parish is changing. We've adopted the word "changing" as a short-hand way of saying that the ethnic background of the residents in the neighborhood is changing.

It's important to recognize that every neighborhood is changing. People do move, whether it is from death, job transfers, marriage, need for larger or smaller houses or apartments, or fear.

The crucial question is not whether blacks or some other minority is moving into the area, but whether the community can be maintained and improved as a good place for old and new neighbors to live together.

This column cannot cover all the possibilities that are open to you in your parish, but I can cover at least three myths that should be shattered about changing neighborhoods. Your parish council can play a role in this vital work.

Myth One: "The neighborhood can't change if nobody moves." We've already seen that this is false.

People will move. The parish council can help people talk about the changes in the community, however. A series of forums on urban life and the encouragement of block clubs will keep people in touch with each other and reality.

Myth Two: "Blacks (or any other minority) reduce property values."

From my own personal experiences and from several studies that I have read I know this is false. There can be a temporary reduction in real estate values if a great number of housing units in one particular area is put on the market at the same time. If you will investigate the prices that blacks pay for homes and apartments you will find that they pay higher prices for the very same units.

The forums and block clubs, with people talking about the changes and willing to discuss their fears about property values, will help alleviate some of this problem.

Two additional actions are needed. A housing referral program should be set up, to help landlords keep their vacancy rates down and to sell houses to people regardless of ethnic back-

ground. The program should be positive, stressing the virtues of living in the area.

A real estate practices committee should also be established to see that the greedy people who prey on people's fears and prejudices do not take advantage of the changes in the community. The committee should be familiar with the housing codes and the real estate ordinances dealing with justice in housing.

Myth Three: "There's nothing you can do." There's plenty that can be done. Much of it will have to be done with the cooperation of others. Your parish council can't tackle the community problems alone. Join, or help to found a community organization.

St. Ann's Home Sends Help To the Aging

The beginning of the year marked the relocation of the department of intake, Saint Ann's Home, to the 1500 Portland Ave. address.

Members of the department take their work with the elderly beyond the boundaries of Saint Ann's into the community. The department processes applications for the Home and the Heritage apartments now under construction, and offers elderly in the community the same services which it conducts for the home's residents. Services offered the community are counseling for the elderly and their families, aid in interpreting the handicaps of the aging, and assistance in developing new living plans when needed.

Department members give explanations and information about Medicare, Medicaid benefits, Old Age Assistance, Social Security Benefits, and other sources of possible aid to any individual upon request. Recognizing that those having the



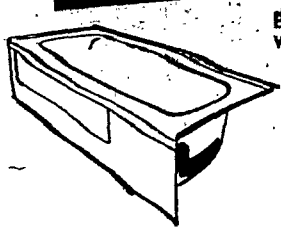
Photo by Susan McKinney

Sister Marie Michelle, administrator of Saint Ann's Home, standing left, discusses community services offered by the department of intake with, left to right, Miss Marie Weidman, department head, and her assistants Miss Sherry Cohen and Mrs. Mary Sullivan.

greatest need are often unable to search out help on their own, department members visit elderly individuals who need assist-

ance. As Miss Weidman, the department head said, "Seeing them in the environment gives clues to what they need."

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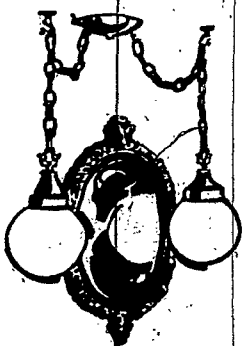
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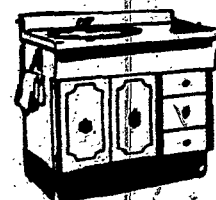


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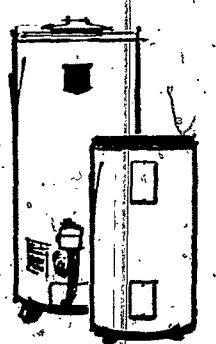


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RETREAT SCHEDULE

Men's weekend retreats are scheduled Feb. 23-25 at Notre Dame Retreat House. Anyone wishing to go should contact names listed or the retreat house. All men in the diocese are invited!

St. Stanislaus, Richard H. Clar, 467-2925; St. George's, Peter Pikunas, 467-6954; St. Michael's, Joseph Zimmer, 342-4039; Holy Redeemer, Joe Nalore, 277-4827; St. John, Clyde, and St. Patrick, Savannah, P. DiSanto, 923-7171; St. Rose, Lima, J. Mangano, 582-1340; St. John, Spencerport, W. Coffey, 352-4901; Most Precious Blood, 458-6079.



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