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## The Angels Were Watching

Corning Catholic School North borrowed six-month-old Melissa Vincent for the key role in The Angels Were Watching, performed Dec. 15 before an autience of 350 in St. Vincent de Paul parish hall. Mary is played by Catherine Giardina and Joseph, by James Lesso. The Angel Gabriel looking on is Paul Smith. The supporting cast numbered about 80. Other Christmastime events included the fourth and fifth graders' visit to Dutton Nursing Home in Beaver Dams, where Father Joseph F Hogan, St. Vincent pastor, celebrated Mass, and the annual Golden Mass to which the children brought gifts for poor people in the area.

## **Search Continues For SSI Eligibles**

When Susan Kofahl of the Monroe County Office for the Aging went hunting for elderly people eligible for Supplemental Security Income, she found many uncomplainingly pinching pennies. Two elderly sisters were surviving on \$86 a month in an uninsulated shanty by the Genesee River. In Hamlin, an old man was paying \$40 of his monthly \$100 Social Security check to rent a shack. Another man was found living in half a sawmill with virtually no imcome.

Supplemental Security Income is a year-old federal program designed to provide basic income for the aged, the blind and the disabled. It is administered by the Social Security Administration, but its funds come from general tax revenue, not Social Security resources:

As of the end of October, 5,017 elderly persons in Monroe County were receiving SSI payments. Mrs. Kofahl suspects that there may be another 2,000 elderly eligible. She, plans to contact more than 11,000 people by telephone during the next six months to screen potential recipients. Some SSI recipients are among the volunteers for this telephone campaign. More volunteers are needed. Interested persons may contact Susan Kofahl at 442-6350.

Although Mrs. Kofahl considers SSI a progressive step, she sees problems in the system that need to be worked out. SSI is a flat grant. Consequently, recipients in some parts of the country benefit from it more than those in areas with a higher cost of living. SSI raises' income to a constant amount. When social security or pension benefits are increased, SSI payments decrease. Individuals formerly on welfare are sometimes dissatisfied with SSI because it lacks personal attention. Rent increases and other living expenses affected welfare payments, but make no difference with SSI.

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Reople just above the SSI eligibility level may feel the greatest hardship, according to Mrs. Kofahl. For example, a person living alone with an in-come of \$227 or less a month (\$315 or less for a couple living alone) meets the income requirement for SSI. He may own a home valued at less than \$25,000 and a car valued at less than \$1,200, but if he has other resources worth more than \$1,500. (\$2,250 for a couple) he does not qualify. Many older people have a few thousand dollars in the bank that they hesitate to spend because they want to have something to leave their children or feel obligated to have respectable funeral.

Eligible incomes for persons in other living situations are as follows: \$131/month or less for a person living with his or her own children; \$171/month or less for a person living with others; \$201/month or less for a couple living with their children; \$226/month or less for a couple living with others. Couples may receive SSI payment if only one spouse qualifies, under certain circumstances. It is also possible to work and receive supplemental income.

Persons who feel that they may qualify should call the SSI Alert Number, 232-5109.

