

# Chemung Catholic School Opportunity Persists

Last in a Series  
BY MARTIN TOOMBS

Elmira — Significant improvements in the academic offerings of the Elmira Catholic schools were made possible by the formation of the Chemung County Catholic School System. They include the addition of the Junior High, full time music teachers, and an expanded physical education program.

Many of those involved in the consolidation agree that the Junior High at St. Patrick's was the most significant improvement made possible by the consolidation. Sister Julia Clare, principal of St. Mary's school for nine years, noted that the addition of the Junior High was the action that benefited the children's education the most. She explained that the Junior High can do much more for the seventh and eighth grades than was possible when they were distributed around the city.

"You couldn't believe how good that Junior High was when it first opened," Dr. Thomas Curran, president of the school board at the time, commented. He cited especially the work of Sister Mary Bernadette and Sister Clare Francis Mogenhan, who organized the entirely new school for its September 1971 opening.

Sister Mary Agnes Zimmer, superintendent from 1968 until June 1976, noted that the Junior High was the most important improvement made possible by the consolidation. She singled out the subject specialization and physical education program for praise.

Sister Joan Cawley, current principal, says that the Junior High broadens student's viewpoints, and helps them to accept others, as they get to know more students in their age group. The parish basketball teams, which often pit classmates against each other, are good, sister said, as the students learn to "beat a team on Sunday, and talk to them on Monday."

"We can offer so much more at this level, geared for their level," Sister Joan emphasized, noting the innovative program at the Elmira College Murray Center during May the past few years as an example.

The educational programs in the elementary schools have also benefited from the consolidation. Sister Julia Clare noted that the schools all have libraries and learning resource centers; before the consolidation there had been no available space. Also added were two full time music teachers, who provide instrumental, classroom and chorus instructions at all the schools. Each school has a band and a chorus, and a combined concert each Spring has been well attended.

In its sixth year of operation, few of those originally involved in the school system remain. Thirteen of the 14 persons on the coordinating committee that planned the consolidation, and 25 of the 32 on the school board at the time are no longer active in the school system. Those maintaining their involvement are all school principals and pastors.

An example of the new leadership is Lawrence Stephens, school board president, who was an Elmira resident only three years when elected.

Stephens noted that it may be an advantage that he is coming onto the scene without any involvement in earlier controversies.

Regarding the immediate future, Stephens said, "I

don't see how we can avoid a tuition increase next year. He noted that the personnel committee is going to propose a salary increase for the system's 33 lay teachers. "All of us should realize that they (the lay teachers) are subsidizing our kids education," Stephens said. The salary scale for lay teachers currently begins at \$5,550. Stephens reported that the committee would like to raise the scale to what the diocese suggests for outside Monroe County, but it would cost \$28,000

and "I don't see how we can do that," he said. But the time has come, he emphasized, to "shift the burden from the 33 lay teachers to the 600 families."

Sister Mary Agnes Zimmer said that the future of the school system will "depend on the parents." She said that the consolidated schools "will survive as long as parents make the sacrifices" so their children can have a Catholic education.

Stephens commented that "I'm optimistic, but guardedly so" about the future of the school system. He went on to identify three goals he feels are important. First, he said, the school board should have better contact with the regional school boards, advisory parent groups at each school. Secondly, the school system needs "some way to get financial stability." The third item is enrollment; "it is a communication problem," he explained, "to convince people that we are offering quality education in every sense."

Sister Mary Agnes summed up the reasons for consolidation when she said that it was done so that "even though not every parish has a school, every child has an opportunity to go to a Catholic school." Availability of quality Catholic education was the goal that caused the creation of the unique Chemung County General Education Board, and the Chemung Catholic School System.

## STATEMENT OF CONDITION

DECEMBER 31, 1976

ASSETS	DEC. 31, 1976	DEC. 31, 1975
Cash and Due From Banks	\$ 11,726,693	\$ 11,673,046
U.S. Treasury and Federal Agency Securities	13,786,299	13,833,064
Obligations of States and Political Subdivisions	11,187,290	10,412,743
Other Investments	11,583,221	7,287,421
Federal Funds Sold	1,400,000	6,500,000
Loans less Unearned Discount and Reserves	61,132,569	54,846,276
Bank Premises and Equipment	5,894,081	5,760,672
Other Assets	1,154,891	1,060,564
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$117,865,044</b>	<b>\$111,383,786</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Deposits		
Demand	\$ 35,627,038	\$ 37,123,242
Savings	49,271,995	42,255,959
Other Time	17,646,857	14,464,326
<b>Total Deposits</b>	<b>\$102,545,890</b>	<b>\$ 93,843,527</b>
Securities Sold under Agreements, etc.	2,401,000	5,080,000
Accrued Taxes and Other Expenses	851,950	707,092
Dividends Payable	151,024	151,024
Other Liabilities	24,615	93,939
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>\$105,974,479</b>	<b>\$ 99,875,582</b>
Subordinated Debentures	1,949,000	1,949,000
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$107,923,479</b>	<b>\$101,824,582</b>
Shareholders' Equity		
Common Stock	\$ 4,314,980	\$ 4,314,980
Surplus	2,804,737	2,804,737
Undivided Profits	2,768,669	2,374,508
Undivided Profits Portion of Reserve for Possible Loan Losses	53,179	64,979
<b>Total Shareholders' Equity</b>	<b>\$ 9,941,565</b>	<b>\$ 9,559,204</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Shareholders' Equity</b>	<b>\$117,865,044</b>	<b>\$111,383,786</b>

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