

Learning Disability Teacher Added to Catholic System

By MARTIN TOOMBS

Elmira—A learning disabilities teacher has been added to the program of the Chemung County Catholic School system for the coming year. Sister Robertina Finegan, formerly a teacher at St. Patrick's Junior High, will divide her time among the four schools this year, working with students having difficulty learning.

Sister Robertina isn't a stranger to the field, as she holds a masters degree in learning disabilities from Fairfield University, and has worked with students on special problems in the past. She also has conducted a Summer school this Summer, working with Catholic as well as some public school students.

Sister Robertina will spend much of her time screening kindergarten students and diagnosing students referred to her by classroom teachers. Sister Joan Cawley, junior high principal, explained. The screening of kindergarten students is designed to discover potential problems before they slow a student's progress. Students having difficulty will be tested, and Sister Robertina will determine what course of action will benefit each student. She will then help the classroom teacher and the teacher aides to implement the plan for the student. She also will work with classroom teachers, increasing their knowledge of learning disabilities and of how to work with learning disabled students.

Sister Joan commented that some of the students Sister Robertina will work with are merely behind their classmates, and don't have a specific disability. For those students, she will prepare a program designed to bring them up to grade level.

Enrollment in the system's three elementary schools and junior high was 937 students as of Aug. 1, according to T. H. Banks, school system business manager. More registrations are expected before the school year begins. Last year, the school system began the year with 1,051 students.

All four principals have returned for this year; Sister Alice Marie Kurtz at St. Casimir's, Sister Mary Davidica at Our Lady of Lourdes, Sister Julia Clare at St. Mary's, and Sister Joan Cawley at St. Patrick's Junior High.



Brother Feerick getting ready to open Bishop Kearney's doors as principal.

Br. Feerick Joins BK as Principal

Brother Thomas Feerick who has taken over the reins as principal of Bishop Kearney High School has had an educational career which has included teaching at the elementary and secondary levels interspersed with athletic coaching and directing assignments as well as administrative positions.

Brother received his BA from Iona College and his MA in Sociology from St. John's University in New York. He has done additional graduate work at Holy Cross University, Boston College, Catholic University of America and the University of Hawaii.

Brother spent five years, 1965-70 in Honolulu as assistant principal, school treasurer and community bursar at Damien Memorial

High School. In 1971, after a year of teaching at Bergen High School in New Jersey, Brother was assigned as Principal to Bishop Hendricken High School in Rhode Island.

The school, according to accounts, with only 430 students was on the brink of closing but under the direction of Brother Feerick, made a turnaround and now has an enrollment of 850.

This number is dwarfed by Bishop Kearney's 2000 students whom Brother will meet in a few weeks. But in talking with him he didn't sound daunted. At present, with having just arrived on the scene, he is thinking in terms of financial stability. "Trying to set up a budget that is realistic," he explained.



Incoming freshmen, Martha Heinrich and Amy Pappoon along with Sister Mary Kay Ryan who is the new comoderator for the St. Agnes freshman class discuss plans for the school's Orientation Day.

St. Agnes Structures Study Halls

St. Agnes Freshman Orientation Day on Sept. 7 opens the 1977-78 school year which finds changes in the school's policy, faculty and courses.

Trimester sections will be replaced by quarterly divisions with quarterly report cards issued. Study halls will be a regular part of the school day. Previously St. Agnes has not had formal study halls but students have been encouraged to use their unstructured time responsibly.

"This has been a good experience," said Sister Anne Guerin, principal, "but parents, faculty and administration have felt that some degree of structure would enhance the quality of education."

Teachers new to the faculty include: Sister Ann Patrice Carrigan from DeSales High School; Sister Kristin Malone and Mrs. Patty Sheridan who will take up duties in the Art Department; Sister Pam Gabryel from Nazareth Academy; Mrs. Margaret Mary Kayser who will teach Introduction to Physical Science.

New courses added are: Justice, Liberty and Law, Advanced Clothing, Advanced Foods and Art IV.

The school calendar will include workshops, faculty and department meetings, a play in November, a musical in May, dances each semester, a Christmas dance, junior prom and senior ball. Leadership Day,

on Oct. 7, will concentrate on guided activities for school leaders. Two Shareholders Days have been scheduled; one in the Fall and the other in the Spring.

Special weeks to be observed include: American Education Week in November; Catholic Schools Week in February; Ethnic Week; Careers Week, Metric Week; Foreign Language Week; Business and Fine Arts Week; Fine Arts Week Human Development Week is scheduled for Nov. 14-18.

St. Agnes will continue participation in the BOCES program as well as the Nazareth College sponsored college courses.

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