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Youth Group Bringing Stations to Life

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Apalachin — This year's production of the Living Stations of the Cross by the St. Margaret Mary youth group is involving 95 high school students.

The 95 students involved are double-cast in the full-costume performance; each cast will do four of the eight scheduled performances.

The project, for which group members have been practicing three evenings a week, is just one event during the year conducted by the youth group.

Organized in 1975 with fewer than 10 members, the group has grown steadily to its current membership of 104. Most members enter after their Confirmation, and the group provides a reception for the Confirmation class and their families after the ceremony.

David Makarsky, a junior in Vestal High School, is the group's president this year. He explained that the students plan their meetings and events, elect their officers, and

have the right to approve their adult advisers, which are nominated to them by the parish council.

He noted that the group is "financially independent of the church," supporting itself mainly through a "Sale of Sales" in May, which raised \$1,300 last year.

They try to sponsor an activity each month, Makarsky said, and have had picnics, hayrides, dances, and other events. The group also is involved in service activities in the parish.

The spiritual vigor of the group comes through in their four Masses each year with members preparing the liturgy, and a retreat in January that was presented by staff from the House of Prayer in Endwell. "We were really pleased with the turnout" for the retreat Makarsky said. Attendance by 71 group members forced the retreat to be a two-session affair.

Work in the group has been the reason many members have gotten involved in the parish, he noted. "I became a lot more involved in the

Church" as a result of membership, he said; he ushers at Sunday Mass, and, with the group's secretary, Lynette Desorcie, teaches a third grade class in the parish's religious education program.

Makarsky noted as being important "all the time and effort" put into the group by their adult leaders: Beverly and Ronald Jones, Pat and Robert Desorcie, and Kitty and Everett Kimball.

A request by Mrs. Jones that she and the other adults not get any publicity for their work caused a chorus of protests from the members standing around her.

The group's goal, she said, is to "foster Christian living, and they do very well."

Many Church leaders are trying to do things for the youth, she stated, but it is more important to give them the opportunity to do things themselves. They have more to offer than they are given credit for, she commented, and what they do usually comes out well.

The group's work on the Living Stations will be



Christ meets His mother in one of the Living Stations being performed by the St. Margaret Mary, Apalachin, Youth Group. Portraying Christ is Brett Desorcie; Mary is Kathy Federowicz.

presented in six neighboring parishes this year, giving people from the surrounding communities an opportunity to see the performance.

On Friday, March 9, they will present the Living Stations at Blessed Sacrament,

Johnson City; Friday, March 16, at St. Ambrose, Endicott; Friday, March 23, at Our Lady of Angles, Endwell; Monday, March 26, at St. Vincent DePaul, Vestal; Friday, March 30, at Our Lady of Sorrows, Vestal; and

Friday, April 9 at St. Patrick's Owego (all at 7:30 p.m.). During Holy Week, two performances will be presented at St. Margaret Mary's, on Monday, April 9 at 8 p.m., and on Good Friday, April 13, at 7 p.m.

Alcohol Education Project Underway in Corning

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Corning—Concern over drug abuse, especially among school children, continues to increase; but statistics reveal that the drug most apt to be abused often is not considered a drug: alcohol.

New York State, in an effort to alleviate problems caused by alcohol abuse, has required that schools provide education on alcohol's effects.

Providing coordinated learning experiences to elementary school children on alcohol and tobacco often is a problem; Jamie Rattray, a health educator at Corning Free Academy Middle School, recognized that his students were coming from four different schools.

After attending a workshop at Rutgers University, paid for by the Corning Area Council on Alcoholism, Rattray got the idea for a curriculum that could be used by all the elementary schools.

The SHIPP program (School, Home, Industry Primary Prevention Program), began operation last October as a demonstration project in the four schools, Carder, Caton, Severn and Erwin Valley, which send students to Corning Free Academy.

Rattray designed the curriculum, using grants from the state Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse and the American Cancer Society Support

also has been received from the American Lung Association.

Presentations on the curriculum have been made at local and national professional conferences.

The curriculum's show-piece is a "Hollywood Squares" set, modeled after the one used in the television game show. As part of the curriculum, students play the "Hollywood Squares" game, using questions they write on the effects of alcohol and tobacco.

The curriculum and the set is at each school for four weeks; two weeks are spent on alcohol, and two on tobacco. During the four weeks, each class in grades four through six spends about a half hour a day on the program.

The curriculum utilizes a variety of approaches, including a student-produced newspaper, interviews with local police, doctors, and health groups; films, video-tapes, and the Hollywood Squares game. Eighth grade peer tutors, specially trained, also go to the elementary school they attended and work with students there.

Rattray pointed out that nurse-teachers are important to the program, as they are involved in classroom instruction, and have responsibility for health education in the elementary schools. The bulk of the teaching is

done by the classroom teachers, he said.

It is a "student-oriented program rather than a teacher-oriented program," he said, which he believes is necessary for health education to work.

The curriculum presents students with information concerning the myths surrounding alcohol, various cultural and religious views on alcohol use, its effects on the body, and investigates reasons why people drink.

The alcohol section's "main thrust is on responsible decision making," Rattray noted; students are not told not to drink. That wouldn't work, he noted, but he hopes that the information will make it possible for the students to "make some responsible decisions on their own."

In the tobacco section, the program "comes down really heavy on anti-smoking," he said. While most drugs are not always right or wrong, he stated, smoking is "detrimental to anybody's health."

There are 750 students in the program this year; Rattray said that he hopes to expand the program within the next two years to the entire school system. He also noted that in addition to the \$20,000 in grant money the program attracted for this year, he expects as much as \$150,000 more to be granted over the next three years.

Lenten Series Slated

Auburn — St. Alphonsus Parish has scheduled a Lenten series showing how our faith has developed over the years for Tuesday evenings during Lent.

The first session titled "Friendship with Jesus" will be presented by Father Edward Palumbo, diocesan coordinator for Worldwide Marriage Encounter. Subsequent topics include "Jesus: Alive and Well and Active on the Planet Earth" given by Father Louis Hohman; "Hunger for the Spirit of Jesus" by Father Peter Clifford; the Sacramental Life-Parish Awareness, presented by Father Bernard Carges; and Peace and Justice and the Paschal Mystery with Father Daniel Tormey.

Another series, sponsored by Sacred Heart and Holy Family parishes is scheduled for Sundays through March beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Home on Genesee Street.

The program will begin on March 4 when Father Donatus Desino, O.F.M., will speak on "Who ME? One of God's People?" The March 11 presentation will feature Father Gabriel Scarsia, O.F.M., speaking on "Is there, or should there be, a Teaching Authority?"

On March 18 Father Charles Mulligan will give a presentation titled "Loving God Finds Our Way In the World," and on March 25 Father Joseph M. Champlin will speak on "The Church and You: From Birth to Death."

Dealing With Grief Is Seminar Topic

Elmira — "Grief Defined - And How to Cope with It" is the subject of the "To Your Health Seminar" at St. Joseph's Hospital Wednesday, March 7, at 7:30 p.m.

Diabetic Association To Meet

Elmira — The monthly meeting of the Southern Tier Diabetic Association will be Saturday, March 10, from 10 a.m. until noon in St. Joseph's Hospital's Doctors Meeting Room. It will mark the first Elmira meeting for the association.

The speaker will be Looknarine Persaud, MD of the Southport Family Medicine Center, who will speak on "Diabetes Mellitus Update."

The meeting is open to diabetic patients, their families, friends, and the general public.

Anniversary Observed

Hornell—Eighty-nine years of service were celebrated Feb. 14 when St. James Mercy Hospital commemorated the hospital's founding Feb. 13, 1890, by Father James M. Early.

The observance started with an anniversary Mass celebrated by Father Eugene Emo, chaplain, in the hospital chapel. Staff and nursing students were served lunch in the cafeteria by Sister Mary Rene, Paul Shephard and William Connors, the hospital's administrators. Anniversary booklets and refreshments were featured on patients' trays.

Dr. Murray Polsky, a practicing Elmira psychiatrist, will discuss the process of normal grief and depression and treatment of it. An open discussion will follow the presentation.

The seminars are the first Wednesday of each month, in the Doctors Meeting Room on the hospital's first floor, to the right of the Market Street entrance.

Those who wish to attend the free-of-charge programs are asked to call the Community Relations Office at St. Joseph's a few days before the program to reserve a seat.

The April 4 program will be "How to cope with my children while aging" and will include a panel of professionals headed by Dr. Frank R. Brand, Elmira internist.

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