

Parishes Acting to Lower Energy Costs

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

"Thou shalt not waste heat."

While that is not one of the commandments, rapidly rising fuel bills are forcing many parishes to consider heat conservation to be a necessary element of their financial survival.

A few years ago, it was enough to turn down thermostats; now fuel conservation in many parishes has taken the form of aggressive steps to reduce heating and lighting costs.

Included among those working to reduce their utility bills are Holy Cross, Ovid, Immaculate Conception, Ithaca, and the Elmira Catholic Schools.

Holy Cross has installed two "Casablanca" fans on the church's flat ceiling, and put 10 inches of foam insulation in the attic. The ceiling is 30 feet high, Father Edwin Wedow, pastor, said, and the two large-bladed fans were installed this past summer to push hot air down from the ceiling during the winter. The fans have four speeds, he reported, and make less noise than the one fan used on the altar in the summer. The insulation and the fans should reduce heating costs, Father Wedow said, but they won't really know how much until the heating season begins.

Utility bills at Immaculate Conception Parish amount to \$25,000 a year, according to Anthony Leach, parish business manager. Last summer the parish began a project that is transforming the school's appearance and should significantly reduce heating costs.

The high ceilings in the school, most of them 14 feet high, are being lowered to nine feet through the installation of a suspended ceiling with insulated panels. The upper hall and most of the classrooms were completed during the summer; what work remains Richard Button, head custodian, hopes to finish during upcoming vacations so it will be completed before the height of the heating season.

Button explained that the work was done by the personnel the school nor-

Spina Bifida Group Elects New Officers

The Greater Rochester Spina Bifida Association feted present officers and elected a new slate for 1979-80 at a recent meeting.

The association honored outgoing officers Marty and Nancy Gullen, co-chairpersons; Peggy Neufeglise, vice chairman; Sol and Ann Lempert, treasurers; Betty Rund and Nancy Bartlett, corresponding secretaries; Linda Hise, newsletter editor, and Donna Turner, librarian.

New officers are Ann Lempert and Ginger Schwartz, co-chairpersons; Peggy Neufeglise, vice chairman; Paul and Beryl Contestable, treasurers; Laverne Judge, corresponding secretary; Steve and Sue Paprocki, newsletter editors, and Lynn Melchoff, librarian.

mally has in the summer, except for the electrical work, which was done by a parish volunteer. The lights, formerly mounted on the high ceilings, are now at the nine foot level.

When the ceilings were lowered, the top panel of the windows was painted and insulated on the inside, as it is now above the ceiling.

Button said that it will be some time before they will be certain of the heat savings, but even now he can see reduced maintenance expenses. Less wall area, fewer, more accessible lights, and less window area are the reason.

Leach estimated that the ceiling work will lower heating costs in the school \$3,000 a year, at current rates. That means the project will be paid off in seven years, he said. He also commented that the use of parish employees was a significant saving, and complimented them on the fine job they did.

Immaculate Conception is one parish that doesn't use the church for weekday Masses during the winter, using the school chapel. Leach noted that they are considering placing fans on the church's peaked, 50-foot high ceiling, to push down hot air. It may be possible, he said, to install the fans as work is being done to repair damage to the church which occurred in the fire Sept. 25.

Gail Callahan, business

manager for the Chemung County General Education Board, attended a seminar on a federally-funded program which provides matching funds for schools doing work that will reduce fuel or electricity use.

The program, administered by the state, is specifically for "non-public schools and hospitals," Mrs. Callahan reported, and she foresees no problem with the state deciding that they didn't mean Catholic schools, as has happened in the past. Mrs. Callahan said that most of those at the seminar represented Catholic schools.

She was taught to do an energy audit at the seminar she said, to look for places where savings could be made. An engineering study is necessary before an application for funds is made. The organization operating the school must contribute half the cost of the project, but its share may include the value of donated labor, donated materials, or labor performed by regular employees.

Mrs. Callahan noted that she would like to get aid for new lights for St. Mary's School. Currently each classroom has four incandescent lights. It has been estimated, she said, that converting to fluorescent lights would cost \$12,000, with the expense paid back in four or five years.

Mrs. Callahan added that the convents the system

operates also are eligible for the program.

Leach and Button also attended a seminar on the aid program for Immaculate

Conception Parish. Leach noted that he would like to get funding to replace all the

windows in the school, a job he estimates would cost \$60,000.

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