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# COURIER-JOURNAL

## Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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### Rising to the Occasion

#### Instruction Tailored to Age, Ability

By Martin Toombs  
Southern Tier Editor

**Horseheads**— The fifth and sixth graders were enjoying themselves with the plastic construction blocks, building a car.

But they weren't just playing. An observer might notice that they were performing an experiment in physics, although they probably don't know what the word means.

Once they completed their car, they recorded the weight, length and how far it traveled down a ramp as well as at what angle the ramp was placed. All the measurements were to be done in the metric system and after three trials with the car, they would build another and compare the results.

The children are students in a gifted and talented program, known as "GATEWAYS," of the Horseheads Central School District, in Broad Street School. Included in classes, taught by Peggy Dineen, are 12 students from St. Mary Our Mother School, who walk to the public school to

participate in the federally-funded program.

The physics experiment was just one exercise during an hour-and-a-half class that occurs twice every six days.

There are three sections to the program; the musically gifted, who are taught by the music teachers; and the art and intellectually gifted, who are taught by Mrs. Dineen in separate classes. Mrs. Dineen is one of three such teachers in the program, who each teach classes at two elementary schools.

In addition to the experiment with the cars, the students also did a series of classification exercises, which grew increasingly complex. Working with 16 wooden blocks of various shapes, sizes and colors, Mrs. Dineen led the students through a series of problems that required them to do complex reasoning, at times working to solve problems considering several variables.

And a brainstorming session to list as many mammals as possible resulted in a list of 50, to be used later for more classification exercises.

The art students were involved in two different projects; some were completing a drawing of a vase and flowers, and others were doing an art work on fall colors, using tissue paper. The students were in the program for their demonstrated art ability, and that ability was evident in their work.

Mrs. Dineen, trained as a research chemist and a fifth grade teacher before joining the GATEWAYS program last year, explained the "enrichment" program as being "geared for the child's social age," even though it deals with concepts that would normally be taught older students. Building the cars was an example; the 10- and 11-year olds enjoyed making the cars, but they were just as interested in the more complex possibilities that would result from the runs down the ramp. They quickly began to hypothesize about which car would go farthest.

The enrichment approach is used instead of having students skip grades because it "keeps them with their social and chronological age peers," Mrs. Dineen said,



At work on a project as part of the art class in the gifted and talented program are Amy Cox, left, Sheila Lemoncelli and Jamie Billington.

and avoids having them miss some part of the curriculum completely. It also makes it possible for a student gifted in a specific area to do advanced work in that area, while continuing with the regular curriculum.

Not only does the program offer enrichment

for the gifted, Mrs. Dineen noted, but it also attacks a problem that has vexed educators for years: the high drop-out rate among those with above-average intelligence.

Mrs. Dineen noted that the students in the program accept the challenge of the

additional work, both in home assignments she gives and the extra work they must accomplish to make up for the time they lose from their regular classroom. The students don't complain about the fact they do more work than their classmates, she noted, and are eager to work on their assignments.



### Willing Hands

These volunteers (from left) Ted Johnston, Bud Johnston, Father Robert Werth and David McCarthy, were just a few of the many who donated their services in repairing and winterizing the Auburn Youth Center recently. The center is in the former Fulton Street School.



With the children gathering around, Father O'Connell blesses the Ss. Peter and Paul Mitten Tree in ceremonies on the first Sunday of Advent.

### Ss. Peter and Paul Dedicates Mitten Tree

Elmira-Father Richard O'Connell blessed the parish "Mitten Tree" as well as the advent wreath on the first Sunday of Advent at Ss. Peter and Paul Church.

The mitten tree, an evergreen set up in the church and decorated not with lights or other decorations but with hats and mittens made by parishioners, has become an annual part of the parish's preparation for Christmas. This is the fifth year the parish has participated in the program.

Many parishioners are involved in the project, making mittens and hats that are placed on the tree, some working year-round. Then at Christmas, they are used as part of the Christmas baskets the parish distributes. During Advent the tree is a reminder both of the parish's effort to aid the poor, and of the need for such aid.

Father O'Connell with the assistance of the children who were at the Mass, who gathered around the tree for the ceremony.

The project is sponsored each year by the parish Human Development Committee.

The tree was dedicated by

**A. W. BELBY & SON**  
Funeral Home  
James Rotsell  
Darrell O'Brian  
139 Walnut St.  
Dial 936-9121  
Corning, N.Y.

**Charles A. Hughes Jr.**  
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### Holiday Stress Is Topic

Elmira-The Divorced, Separated and Widowed Catholics Group will conduct its regular meeting Sunday, Dec. 16, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Patrick's School gym.

### Wine Party

Auburn— The Auburn area Divorced, Separated and Widowed Group will sponsor a Wine and Cheese Party on Wednesday, Dec. 12 at St. Mary's School on Clymer Street here. The party begins at 7:30 p.m. and all are welcome.

The featured speaker will be Dr. David McGeorge, clinical psychologist at the Chemung County Mental Health Clinic. His talk, titled "Holidays: Happy or Horrible?" will deal with the unpleasant and often stressful aspects of the holiday season. Dr. McGeorge also will outline the support services available locally to both families and individuals.

The meeting is open to the public and persons of all faiths are welcome.

### Program Schedule

Elmira-The second and third part of Father John Powell's series on the family will be shown tonight, Wednesday, Dec. 12, and next Wednesday, Dec. 19, by the Chemung County Catholic Network. All programs are presented at 7 p.m. on cable channel 4 in Chemung County.

Friday, Dec. 14, a program on healing that includes in the cast Ed Asner, Carol Burnett and Walter Matthau will be shown. On Monday, Dec. 17, the program will be repeated.

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