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COURIER-JOURNAL

Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

Parishes Are Sponsors

Laotian Refugee Family Arrives in Corning

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Corning— A sense of anticipation was evident in the crowd of more than 30 persons who crowded around the gate at the Chemung County Airport Saturday evening Dec. 8 watching the passengers arriving.

Representing the three Corning parishes, the people were some of those who had been preparing for five months to receive a refugee family from Indochina.

And finally they arrived, mother, father and six children, walking across the runway in the chill December air, without any coats.

A flurry of flashbulbs and a chorus of greetings welcomed them; the mother was given a bouquet of flowers, and the children received candy bars. A student of French attempted to speak to the father, and found that he knows no French. Then a foreign exchange student from Thailand spoke Thai to the family, and found they could understand each other.

The greetings from the crowd and the picture taking continued, as those meeting other passengers from the flight stayed watching. Among those welcoming the Laotian family were Father Joseph F. Hogan and Father Robert Beligotti of St. Vincent's, and Father Michael Hogan of St. Mary's.

Parishioners from all three parishes are involved in the sponsorship, and one St. Patrick's couple, Marcella and Kenneth Masteller, headed the social adjustment committee. Mrs. Masteller and their children stayed the first night with the family in their Park Avenue apartment, and she had brought winter coats for the entire family with her. Some of the children had difficulty getting on the unfamiliar clothing.

Meanwhile, communication was accomplished through the translation of Dew Sirinath Nanahorn, a foreign exchange student, who also stayed with the family that night. Dew is living with the Bailey family and attending Corning West High School.

The baggage for the eight-member family consisted of one bread-box-size cardboard box.

The six children of Nhoth Oumsou, the father, and Samly, the mother, are aged one through ten. A few days later, Mrs. Masteller reported that the children and her children were enjoying playing together, and the language barrier wasn't a problem. Perhaps, she pointed out, the fact that two of her children are Oriental, adopted from Korea, helped, but the children were all getting along well. She noted that when she went to pick up the family to take them to the doctor Tuesday, Dec. 11, Samly was



Samly Oumsou and child.

Photos by Martin Toombs



Nhoth Oumsou, at right, and members of his family are greeted by Dew Sirinath Nanahorn, at left.

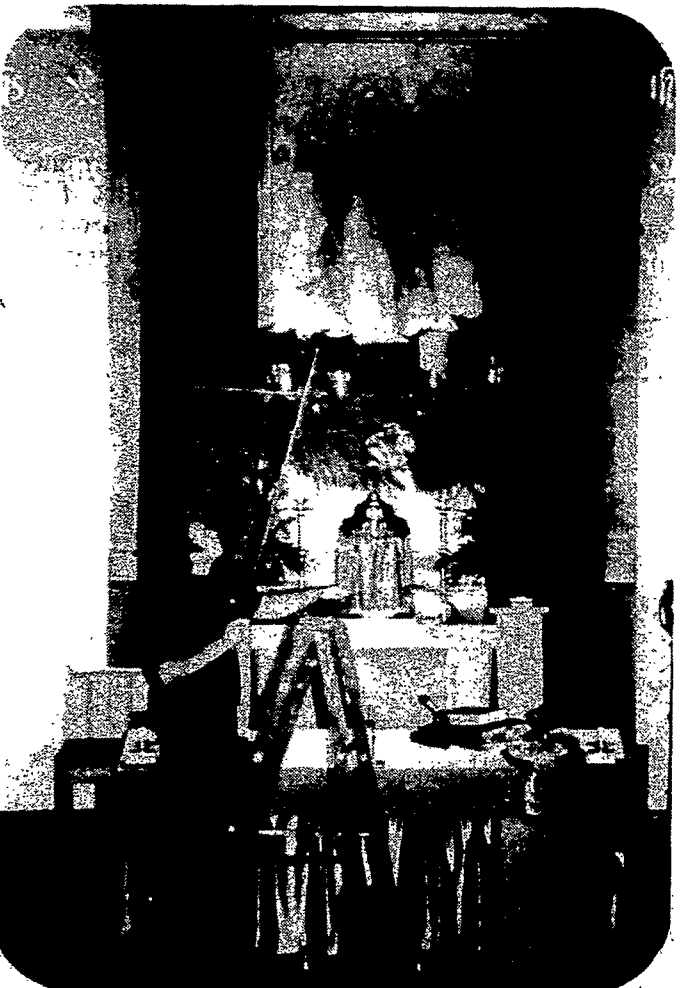
upset when she saw that she had come by herself and left her children with a babysitter.

Mrs. Masteller noted that the Oumsous told them that they had spent two years in a

refugee camp in Thailand, after they escaped from their native Laos, by swimming across a river.

The family's arrival ended the five months of waiting for

the three parishes, and began the work of settling the family into their new home, work which the committee members at the airport were looking forward to enthusiastically.



Advent Wreath

The advent wreath took on increased dimensions this year at St. Mary of the Lake, Watkins Glen. Shown is Father Gerald O'Connor, parish associate, lighting the candles on the wreath, which is four feet in diameter and suspended from the ceiling by steel cables.

CHD Grant Helps Students Get Needed Medical Care

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Corning— A Campaign for Human Development (CHD) grant is making it possible for students at Corning East High School to receive medical care they need and wouldn't be able to afford.

The East High Health Office Grant Program received a \$1,000 grant from CHD last summer. The grant was applied for by Shirley Poietto, then school nurse at East High. The new nurse, Rhoda Cruise, has assumed responsibility for the grant.

Working with a committee

of two teachers and a guidance counselor, Mrs. Cruise is using the money to pay for medical care for students who otherwise couldn't afford it.

Three cases have occurred, Mrs. Cruise reported; two of the students aided were 18-year-olds living by themselves. Two girls had infections that needed treatment, and each had no money to go to a doctor, and are not eligible for Medicaid.

The third case was a girl who lost her glasses, and her family, living on Social Security, was just above the level needed to qualify for

Medicaid, but did not have the money to replace the glasses.

Mrs. Cruise noted that the majority of students that she sees in the nurse's office who need further medical attention can get it, but occasionally someone will be unable to pay for the care they need.

She also has arrangements with two local doctors who will take referrals, she said, if the student has no doctor.

Mrs. Cruise commented that she expects the \$1,000 grant to be used up by the end of the school year. She added that it is "marvelous to have this grant," and that she would like to have such money in future years.

She doubts the school district would be willing to fund the program, she said, but she has yet to decide whether or not to apply to the Campaign for Human Development for next year.

Series Concluding

Elmira— The 12th and final week of programs shown by the Chemung County Catholic Network begins tonight, with the concluding program in Father John Powell's series on the family.

Friday, Dec. 21, and Monday, Dec. 24, "Jesus B. C.: Trinity" will be shown, described as "an inspiring parable on why God became Man."

All programs in the series begin at 7 p.m. on cable channel 4 in Chemung County.

Alcoholism Seminar

Elmira— The monthly Alcoholism Seminar will be Thursday, Dec. 20 at 12:15 p.m. in St. Joseph's Hospital's Doctors Meeting Room.

Sister Dorothy Becker, associate director of the Recorder's Court Family Support Program, will speak on children of alcoholic families.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the

Social Work-Stars Office at 733-5519.

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