

COURIER-JOURNAL

Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

Southern Tier:
Martin Toombs
268 W. 13th St., B-1
Elmira Heights, N.Y. 14903
(607) 732-3371

Auburn-Geneva:
Mary Ann Giamerty
294 1/2 South Street Rd.
Auburn, N.Y.
(315) 253-2176

Missionary Tells of 43 Years in Asia

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — It was near the end of her education at St. Joseph's School of Nursing when a sister-faculty member said to Mary Hock, of Meadville, Pa., near Erie, "Hey girl, what are you going to do about that vocation I think you have?"

Miss Hock noted her preference for a missionary order. She was told to look into the Maryknolls, and soon started receiving literature from the missionary order.

That story was one of the fond remembrances for Maryknoll Sister Mary Hock, who visited St. Joseph's School of Nursing recently to mark the 50th anniversary of her graduation from St. Joseph's, and of her entrance into the Maryknoll order.

Now living in San Diego and working in a hospice program, Sister Mary was a missionary in China and Korea from 1933 until 1976, a 43-year period marked by wars and social upheaval in the area.

Although she doesn't really care to talk about it, the 70-year-old nun has seen much of the world. In addition to her travels in the

Orient, for several years she accompanied orphans for adoption outside Korea, traveling many times to various European countries.

She does enjoy talking about two periods of her work in the Orient, that in the south of China from 1938 until she and all other foreign missionaries were expelled in 1949, and her service in Korea which began the following year.

The major figure in her service in South China was Bishop Francis Xavier Ford, one of the first four Maryknoll priests to have gone to China, and a man Sister Mary speaks of in reverential tones.

She had gone to Bishop Ford's diocese after working for four years as a nurse in Shanghai. But in her new assignment, she worked in a village mission project. She explained that previously missionary activity had involved setting up institutions: hospitals, schools and orphanages. It was Bishop Ford's idea, she said, for sisters to travel about the sprawling mission districts and teach the residents in their own villages.

The sisters walked in pairs to the "outstations" surrounding each parish, she explained, where they

taught religion. They would be away from the parish for 15 days at a time, she noted, and during their travels would concentrate on teaching the women; Maryknoll priests taught the men. Where she worked, she recalled, the nearest outstation was 10 miles away, and the farthest required a 25-mile walk.

As for the plan, sister said that it was "very successful," commenting that Bishop Ford was "100 years ahead of his time."

The village women were trained as catechists, she said, and were called "Sister Catechists of Our Lady."

The work's effectiveness is still being shown, she noted, as she continues to get letters, 30 years after she was expelled, from some of the women she trained. The letters come through missionaries in Hong Kong, she noted. Despite the opposition of the Communist government, she said, they have kept the faith alive. Chinese priests who have been released from prison, she said, say Mass secretly, and the catechists distribute the Eucharist to the other Catholics in the area.

In a letter she wrote to St. Joseph's, Sister Mary noted

that while in South China she nursed Bishop Ford back to health. "I nursed proudly as a Maryknoll Sister, and as a graduate of St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing," she wrote. "I believe my 'claim to fame' is the privilege that was mine in caring for Bishop Ford."

Bishop Ford recovered from that illness, but died in a Communist prison in 1951, a "dry martyr."

After her expulsion from China in 1949, she was sent to Pusan, Korea, arriving in May 1950. On June 25, the fighting broke out.

Even 30 years later, retelling the conditions in Pusan caused Sister Mary to pause with emotion. During the Japanese occupation, she noted, Pusan was a city of 200,000 people. When she arrived it had 800,000 residents. Six months later the population had swelled to 1.3 million.

The Maryknolls operated a medical clinic for the refugees, she noted, with two sister-doctors, two sister-nurses, and Korean doctors and nurses. Later, she said, the clinic would be aided greatly by American military doctors who spent their free time working there.

The clinic treated 2,000

patients each day. She had never seen smallpox until that time, she said, as well as "lots of malnutrition, typhoid, cholera, tuberculosis, meningitis and polio." Her voice trailed off as she listed the diseases the staff saw daily.

It kept up like that for four years, she said.

Now nearly 30 years later, most American's knowledge of the Korean War probably is limited to the television show "MASH." In case anyone wondered, Sister Mary approves wholeheartedly of the program, and never misses it.

"MASH," she said, is the "most authentic thing they've got on the screen." She commented that the show accurately depicts life in Korea at the time, and the Korean people.

Despite the depth of her commitment to her work as a missionary, it does not diminish or overshadow her expressions of commitment to her current work with the terminally ill. While enjoying the opportunity to talk about her mission experiences, Sister Mary took time to point out that she sees life as "evolving," and she feels that "each experience I've had has prepared me for a wider and greater experience" that has followed.

Education Efforts Recognized

Hornell — Certificates recognizing participation in continuing education programs during the past year were presented to 127 members of the St. James Mercy Hospital staff in ceremonies May 14.

The staff members attended courses in their specialties as part of the Joint Educational Training (JET) program conducted by Southern Tier Hospital Management, a cooperative of the hospitals of Steuben, Schuyler and Chemung counties.

Opening remarks, congratulations and introduction of the JET representatives present were given by William Connors, associate administrator and committee member. Connors noted that during the year 35 courses and workshops were given, and 340 participants spent 4,875 hours in the classroom.

St. Cecelia's Bazaar Sunday

Elmira — St. Cecelia's Annual Bazaar will be Sunday, June 1, from 1 until 10 p.m. on the parish grounds at 950 Lake St. International foods, games and music will be part of the event. A chicken barbecue will be served in the church hall.



JoEllen Kessler of the Elmira chapter of the Red Cross demonstrates resuscitation techniques for an interested group of second-graders from Lenox School in Elmira Heights.

'Wellness' Fair Conducted

Elmira — St. Joseph's Hospital dedicated its observance of Hospital Week this year to helping people stay out of the hospital.

The five-day "Wellness Fair" at the hospital provided information on prevention, nutrition, safety, exercise and such procedures as cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

In addition to the general public, many school children attended. The highlights for them were the opportunity to sit in the seat of a car and watch an air bag blow up in

front of them, a demonstration provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and having their diets analyzed by a computer supplied by the Pillsbury Company.

The computer analyzed the subject's diet of the previous day, and showed the percentages of the various recommended daily requirements that were met. It also offered recommendations for improvement.

Many local health agencies

participated in the event, including the county Health Department, the American Lung Association, and various departments of St. Joseph's.

Also on display was an explanation of a Health Parcourse Fitness Circuit, a circuit of exercise stations that is under construction in Elmira's Brand Park. The parcourse project is sponsored by the state Division for Youth and the CETA program, in conjunction with the Elmira Department of Parks and Recreation.

Sr. Augustine Honored

Hornell — Sister Mary Augustine, RSM, assistant head of the pastoral care department of St. James Mercy Hospital, received the first annual "Employee of the Year" award during the annual awards program May 17.

She was presented a plaque by Sister Mary Rene, administrator, after William Connors, associate administrator, read the accompanying citation:

"Sister serves by helping patients and their families while hospitalized and after discharge. She has been in-

strumental in helping establish the Hornell Chapter of 'Make Today Count,' and the Oncology and Hospice programs. She serves with a dedicated sense of duty to patients, visitors, co-workers and the community. Her happy spirit and laugh are contagious. To know her is to admire her; to work with her is to be edified by her complete giving of self."

A duplicate plaque will be hung in the "Court of Honor"

Organ Recital

Horseheads — Mary Potter, organist and director of St. Mary Our Mother's adult choir, will present an organ recital Sunday, June 1 at 7 p.m. in St. Mary Our Mother Church. Ms. Potter, who teaches piano and organ privately, will be playing works by Bach, Dupre, and Gordon Young among others. There will be a free will offering.

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

in the hospital's main lobby. As part of the selection process for the award, employees were asked to submit recommendations for the award.

Also honored at the dinner were 48 employees for terms of service, in five year increments, totaling 375 years.

James Willsey of pastoral care gave the invocation for the evening, and Sister Mary Rene welcomed the honored employees and their guests. Dr. Muayad Al-Hussaini, a Board of Directors member, expressed the appreciation of the hospital to the employees.

Among those honored for their length of service were: William Lusk, 30 years; Rose Scotti and Flossie Wood, 20 years; and Patricia Green, Virginia Parker and Audrey Oney, 15 years.

Gerould's Pharmacies
S. Main St. and Church & Hoffman
Elmira
Delivery Service
733-6696