

# 400 Attend Clown Convention Dedicated to Joyful Laughter

By Martin Toombs  
Southern Tier Editor

Ithaca — More than 400 persons congregated at Ithaca College the week of Aug. 10-16 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Clown, Mime, Puppet and Dance Minstry.

Which is quite an accomplishment for a three-year-old organization.

As the brochure for the week explained, "Of course, silly... it isn't really the 100th anniversary, but when 100 years rolls around none of us will be around to enjoy it. That's dumb. Why not celebrate it now when we are here to rejoice, to smile, to hug, to eat birthday cake? It's the CLOWNABLE thing to do."

With the atmosphere for the week so set, it came as no surprise that during the program, which coincided with the Democratic National Convention, an election campaign was waged. Running for president were a clown, a puppet and a marionette. The clown's campaign slogan was "put a real clown in the White House."

But the election ended in a tie. It seems the candidates had all urged everyone to vote early AND often, and they did, resulting in the same number of votes for each candidate.

While clowning was the order of each day, workshops on such things as liturgy, dance, make-up, use and construction of puppets and marionettes, magic, and even classes on flame-eating were taught, in a fountain (yes, in the fountain) in an Ithaca College dining hall.

The week's event began

## Religious Education Workshop Scheduled

Auburn — The Seneca-Cayuga Religious Education Committee will hold a workshop for religious education teachers and interested parents on Saturday, Sept. 13 at Holy Family Parish Center.

The theme of the workshop is, "The Christian Family Celebrates the Sacraments."

The keynote address will be given by Thomas Driscoll, religious education coordinator at St. Louis Parish and chairperson of the Diocesan Liturgical commission.

Workshops will be offered on such topics as Confirmation, Prayer in Our Lives, Eucharistic Celebrations and Youth Renewal among others. A display of books, resource materials and religious articles is also planned.

Registration is made by contacting parish personnel or Patricia Lawlor, religious education coordinator at St. Alphonsus Church, (315) 252-7261, by Sept. 3.



Father David Mura, dressed in his vestments decorated with pictures of Mickey Mouse, celebrates Mass for the children at the clown workshop on the lawn outside the Ithaca College Chapel.

with a parade through downtown Ithaca, which formed at a senior citizens housing complex, and took a lengthy stop at the Reconstruction Home, a nursing home, before proceeding to the Commons, where several performances were given, the first of several shows on the Commons during the week.

The heavy schedule of workshops and shows began Monday morning. While unicycles, puppets, novice jugglers and clown faces were prevalent on the campus, also going on were classes such as that given by a theology professor from San Francisco, Doug Adams, on the use of performing arts in liturgy, and practices by groups of dancers, preparing a liturgy for later in the week.

Mary Lu Walker, the singer-composer from Corning, was at work with the children at the workshop, preparing songs for a liturgy Tuesday evening.

And later in the week, field trips left each day, taking 25 participants to a hospital, nursing home or other residential facility to get some experience with the type of clowning ministry in which many of those at the workshop are heavily involved.

Well-attended liturgies were celebrated each evening, varying in styles, serving partially as demonstrations of the use of the performing arts in liturgy. A special Mass honoring Mary on the Feast of the Assumption wound up the week.

Each day's program began at 7 a.m., with an exercise class, and continued until well after 11 p.m. when Potpourri gave participants an opportunity to perform for the group. In between there were dozens of workshops, and shows performed by professional mimes and puppeteers.

Participants at the convention had a variety of backgrounds, and included many persons involved with religious education programs, and several priests, ministers, and Catholic nuns, as well as professional performers.

Father David Mura, diocesan director of Teen Seminar, served as local coordinator for the convention, which was the second offered this summer, the first having been in New Orleans



The residents of the Reconstruction Home enjoyed the visit of the clowns during the parade on Sunday evening which began the week's events at the clown workshop at Ithaca College.

in July. Father Mura, also appearing during the week as "Bosco" the clown, was active throughout the convention.

Another diocesan active during the week, among 90 residents of the diocese who attended the event, was Sister Mary Kay Ryan of St. Agnes High School, who worked in the dance section of the program, and led her "Hosanna" dance troupe in a performance on Friday.

Next year's conventions (the 200th anniversary?) will be in San Francisco and Washington, DC.

## Scouts' Health

A program of health education and awareness, "The Fabulous Human Machine," will be offered to Scouts in the Oretiana Council for a year, beginning Sept. 1. The program covers such topics as dental health, bicycle safety, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, food preparation and care and personal health habits.

## Business in Diocese

Lisa Pinero has been named production assistant in Community Programming at American Cablevision. She will assist in production, studio operations, video training and programming for the local origination channels of the Rochester system of the cablevision firm. She is student in Communications-Journalism at St. John Fisher College.

## Special Rosary

John W. Shea last week invited readers of the Courier-Journal to celebrate the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sept. 8 with a rosary at the shrine in the wooded area around his home

at 273 Rye Rd., Greece. The rosary will be said at 8 p.m. and participants have been asked to bring lawn chairs. Rye Road runs off Latona Road between Ridgeway Avenue and Ridge Road.



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