

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 Ginnerty
294 1/2 South Street Rd.
Auburn, N.Y.
(315) 253-2176

Agreement Reached on Monastery Taxes

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Big Flats — A disagreement between Mount Saviour Monastery and the Town of Big Flats concerning the monastery's property tax liability has been resolved and needs only to be affirmed by the court, the monastery's attorney, Peter Harpending, stated.

Local reports of pending litigation against the town are incorrect, the lawyer said. Harpending called the Oct. 21 date in state Supreme Court a "formality," at which time the agreements reached with the town will be affirmed by the court. No trial will take place, he said.

Town of Big Flats attorney John O'Mara confirmed that an agreement has been

reached which is expected to be formally approved by the town and affirmed by the court.

The Benedictine monastery has for many years paid property taxes on 262 acres of cropland, 42 acres of pasture land, and the buildings used in the monastery's dairy operation. But in 1979, more of the monastery's approximately 1,000 acres of

land were placed on the tax rolls. The monastery paid those taxes under protest, and began proceedings to recover the money and have the additional land removed from the tax rolls.

Those two items are what has been agreed upon, Harpending said. The Supreme Court hearing is for the purpose of affirming two orders agreed upon with the

town, he explained, one calling for the return of that share of the taxes paid on the additional land, and another removing the land from the tax rolls.

At issue, Harpending explained, is whether or not the land is put to religious use. The brothers, living according to the Rule of St. Benedict, believe that all of the land has a religious use, he said, but the

monastery has agreed to pay taxes on those portions it used in the dairy operation.

The agreement will return the situation to that which existed before the change last year, Harpending said.

Involved are taxes paid to Big Flats, Chemung County, and the Elmira and Corning-Painted Post school districts.



Father Thomas Watts speaking to the 30 parishioners participating in the Parish Renewal Weekend at St. Patrick's, Owego, during the final presentation of the three-day program on Sunday, Sept. 14.

Renewal Weekend Schedule Growing

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Owego — The schedule of Parish Renewal Weekends in St. Patrick's Church continues to grow as enthusiasm for the program among its graduates causes more registrations.

St. Patrick's, first of four

Tioga County parishes to offer the program this fall, began with a three-weekend schedule, which was completed last weekend. But three more weekends have already been scheduled, and more are tentatively planned for January.

The program also will be

available during the next two months at St. Margaret Mary, Apalachin; St. Francis, Catatonk; and St. John the Evangelist, Newark Valley.

What has happened was evident in the final segment of the parish's second weekend, Sunday, Sept. 14. The final topic, evangelization, caused

several participants to state that for the coming week, their commitment to evangelization would involve convincing others to participate in the Renewal Weekend.

In fact, Father Thomas Watts, St. Patrick's co-pastor, noted, that is why many of those at the weekend were there. When the first weekend ended, the second weekend had only 19 registrants; when the first group talked to their friends about the program, the registration grew to more than 30.

By Sunday afternoon the second group was easily sharing its reactions to the topics. Members took notes during the presentations while sitting in lawn chairs or beanbag chairs brought from home.

A purposeful but leisurely atmosphere contributed to the sharing in small groups and with the entire group which followed the presentations.

Comments from some participants revealed an increased awareness of their importance in the Church and in the parish, as they told how they had come to realize the need to be a Catholic witness, and not expect the parish priests to be the only evangelizers.

The three-day program ended with Mass.



Workers Commissioned

Bishop Matthew Clark installed the various volunteers at St. Mary's Parish, Corning, in a ceremony Saturday, Sept. 13. He presented the lectors, ushers, religion teachers and parish council members, among others, with a medal symbolic of their call to service. Although not scheduled, a medal also was presented to Father Clark by the pastor of St. Mary's, who presided in a standing ovation.

CCGEB Elects Officers

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — New officers were elected and enrollment discussed at the Chemung County General Education Board (CCGEB) meeting Sept. 12 at St. Mary's.

Re-elected as president was Martin Tracy of St. Patrick's, who is not a board member, having resigned his board seat last year upon his election to the post. Serving as vice president will be Curran Sekella of Our Lady of Lourdes; secretary-treasurer will be Thomas Klotz of St. Patrick's.

Enrollment figures for the start of school showed a decline of 51 students from last September, a decrease similar to that in the public schools, Gail Callahan, system business manager, pointed out.

The first day of school found 191 students at Our Lady of Lourdes, down 7; 257 at St. Mary's, down 6; 172 at St. Casimir's, down 23; and

200 Attend Ecumenical Kick-Off

Seneca Falls — More than 200 people attended the opening of the area's Council of Churches fall season of activities last week. According to Father Michael Conboy, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, the host institution, the number was the greatest drawn to such an event in years.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark spoke at the dinner on the unity all Christians share in the person of Christ, Father Conboy said.

The Council of Churches is the major sponsor of an ecumenical school of religion. That school is this year offering "Living with Death and Dying," taught by Rev. Charles Bollinger; "True God from True God: the Road to Chalcedon," by Dr. James

217 at St. Patrick's Junior High, down 15. The total enrollment stands at 837.

Not included in those figures are 73 children enrolled in the system's new pre-school program, which has classes at the three elementary buildings.

Father John Leary, St. Mary's pastor, initiated a discussion on the effect of closing certain grades to further registration; he called for the system to develop a way to comply with all registration requests. The discussion resulted in a request that the principals examine the system's class size policy.

In other action, Klotz noted efforts for fund-raising that are being planned for the year, beginning with the Walkathon Saturday, Oct. 25.

And Mrs. Callahan reported that the system's application for federal matching funds for new lights in St. Mary's School failed to receive funding.

Campbell; "The Joy of Simple Living," by Rev. William Knox; "Problems on the Road to Religion," by Father Joseph Hart; and "Drinking, What Can We Do?" by Martha McConnell.

Poster Winner

Newark — A fifth grade art assignment led to a summer surprise for a St. Michael's School student. Nicky De Santo is the recipient of a 10-speed bicycle and lock in a statewide contest sponsored by the New York State Office of Crime Prevention. Her poster, "Stop and Lock — the Key to Crime Prevention," was one of 35-winning entries selected from more than 4,500 statewide.

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