

# Reye's Syndrome: A Mysterious Killer

First in a Series  
By Martin Toombs

**Dryden.** — When second-grader Joseph Flaville got the flu in February 1977, it seemed to be a childhood illness which his parents, Doris and Richard Flaville, had experienced with Joseph's four older brothers and sisters.

But more than three years later, Flaville can recall the weather and even the day of the week Joseph felt well enough to return to school.

He went to school that Friday, Flaville said, but returned home feeling lethargic. It appeared to be a recurrence of the flu. But his condition worsened, and on Saturday evening, the family doctor came to the house "in a snowstorm" to see Joseph.

At 3 a.m., Joseph became violent, and they took him to Cortland Hospital, Flaville said. He became

disoriented, and didn't know his parents. At the hospital, they were told to take him to Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, where the problem was recognized immediately as Reye's (pronounced Rise) Syndrome, a rare and mysterious disease afflicting children.

After 11 days in a coma, on Feb. 17, 1977, Joseph died.

One of the top 10 disease killers of children, Reye's was first identified by an Australian pathologist, Dr. Ralph Reye, in 1963.

Dr. Leonard Weiner, assistant professor of pediatrics at the Upstate Medical Center, is medical advisor to the Reye's Syndrome chapter the Flaville's have since organized. He notes that nothing is known about what causes the disease.

The syndrome usually

afflicts persons less than 18 years old, and occurs following influenza Type A or B, or chicken pox. The child gets over the viral infection, and is better for a day or even several days. Then what may be misidentified as more flu symptoms occur, including violent vomiting. But that is followed by a behavior change, when the child becomes irritable and fatigued, and becomes disoriented, possibly getting lost in his or her own home, or is unable to recognize family members.

The final stage, before coma is violent hostility, during which time the child will not listen to reason, and may require several adults to restrain him or her.

Death, if it occurs, is caused by swelling of the brain. Without treatment, the entire process takes an average of three to five days. Although they don't

know the cause of the disease, doctors have developed a procedure for allaying the symptoms, and, Dr. Weiner emphasized, during the past four years have reduced deaths from 50 percent to 25 percent of known cases.

Dr. Weiner noted that most patients in the Upstate's service area are transferred to Upstate, following diagnosis at a local hospital. The first thing they do is place a device to monitor inter-cranial pressure inside the skull, he said. Reye's affects many parts of the body, but it is brain swelling which causes death or mental impairment.

By that time most patients are in a coma, he said, but they administer barbiturates to "paralyze the patient," putting the child on artificial respiration. All life signs are closely monitored, he said, and heavy sedation is maintained.

It is not known exactly why, he said, but the barbiturates "minimize the adverse effect of brain swelling."

A drop in inter-cranial pressure indicates the patient is recovering, and can be brought back from the induced coma, he said. The average length of the monitoring is seven to ten days.

In some cases, when the brain pressure exceeds what is considered a safe level, doctors have removed the top of the patient's skull to relieve the pressure. Flaville noted that he has talked with a couple who had had that procedure performed on their daughter, successfully.

Some recovered patients suffer brain damage as a result of the swelling, Dr. Weiner noted that from his observation, the increased survival rate has not increased the number of brain-damaged patients; ap-

parently the treatment saves as many from brain damage as it does from death.

About 400 cases occur nationally each year; Upstate treated 16 last year. It is more apt to occur between November and March, when flu is more prevalent. It seems to be a rural disease; rarely occurring in urban areas. Although very rare, more than one member of a family has had the disease, and cases of a child having it a second time have been recorded.

Dr. Weiner noted that Upstate is participating in a national survey of Reye's cases in an attempt to determine why some children get the disease. Laboratory research also is being done at Upstate, he said.

**NEXT WEEK:** A group of parents organizes to spread the word about the disease which struck their families.

## Bp. Clark President Of GEM

By JOHN DASH

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will be formally installed as president of Genesee Ecumenical Ministries during a special convocation of representatives from churches in the Rochester metropolitan area on Nov. 20.

Bishop Clark, who has been serving as president-elect, succeeds Isabel Calkins, ecumenical officer for the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, as president. The presidential term of office is one year.

In a letter signed by both the bishop and Rev. Lawrence E. Witmer, executive director of GEM, the first GEM Metropolitan Conference is described as "a new ecumenical expression of the churches." The new form, the letter explains, "is not envisioned as an organization but as a gathering."

The convocations are expected to occur during Advent, Lent and the Pentecost seasons.

The Nov. 20 event will be at Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1040 East Ave. at 7:30 p.m. The evening will include worship, a time for sharing in small groups and the installation of new GEM officers.

In a letter to pastors sent last week, Bishop Clark said, "I would encourage every parish in Monroe County to consider having at least one clergy and one lay representative at the Conference."

"It is our hope," he said, "that this event will help all of us deepen our commitments to work together in a variety of cooperative ministries."

In an interview last week, Rev. Witmer said that the Nov. 20 liturgy will reflect the Advent themes of "preparing ourselves to receive the Christ and what it means to embody that Christ for others."

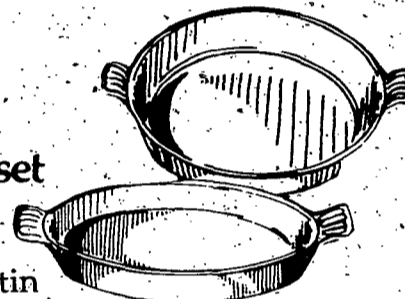
He said that the rites will stress Christ's criteria in the Last Judgment: feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, comforting the sick and visiting the imprisoned.



Foley Kitchen

Tools only  
\$.99 each

Le Creuset  
The World's Finest  
Gourmet Cookware




Au Gratin

Dishes

8-inch . . . . . 8.99

9 2/3-inch . . . . . 10.99



- The exclusive vegetable peeler set (blade and cover) that keeps the worst job in the kitchen from getting under your skin. Peels potatoes, apples, beets, and onions in seconds.
- Four dishwasher-safe stainless steel blades for slicing, grating, chopping, and peeling, including a special french fry blade. Plus plastic blade for mixing, too.
- A deluxe braking system that instantly stops blade and motor turning, as soon as the lid is opened!
- The exclusive Panasonic food holder that fits inside feed tube and positions foods for neat, accurate slicing every time.
- A Pulse button that's essential for momentary starts and stops. Plus separate On and Off buttons for added convenience.
- Smoke-colored bowl has a handle, so pouring and spooning are simple! Dishwasher-safe, too!

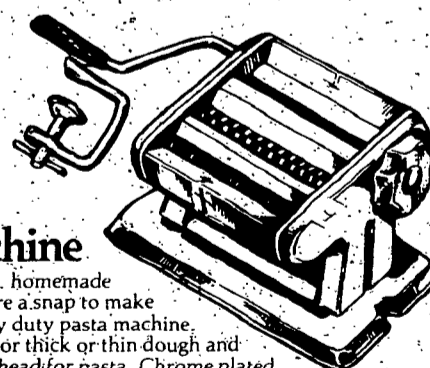
**only 129.95**

**Compare that with any other food processor at any price!**

Offers good for one week only.



Solid Copper Kettles imported from Europe  
any in stock only **14.99**



Pasta Machine

For the true pasta lover . . . homemade noodles, spaghetti, lasagna are a snap to make with our handsome, heavy duty pasta machine. Adjustable roller for thick or thin dough and precision cutter head for pasta. Chrome plated. 4 1/2" capacity.

sale priced at **51.95**

# Cable Wiedemer's Gourmet Gallery

2179 Monroe Avenue in Brighton  
271-1789 Mon.-Sat. 9-5, Thurs. 9-9

Visit our 283 Central Avenue Store  
454-7494