

COURIER-JOURNAL

SOUTHERN TIER-AUBURN GENEVA

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Southern Tier Joins Food Salvage Network

By Martin Toombs
 Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — "Twenty percent of all food produced for human consumption is lost annually in the United States," a 1977 U.S. Department of Agriculture report reads. That represents "137 million tons of food worth \$31 billion that could feed 49 million Americans."

Product liability, extra handling costs and the lack of an organization capable of handling large donations of a single item have made it difficult for such waste to be prevented.

But efforts are now under way to end that scandalous waste of food. Through the National Food Salvage Bank and regional food banks, tax deductions for the donated food, and state Good Samaritan laws protecting food producers from liability, that previously wasted food is now finding its way onto the tables of the nation's poor.

Another link in that national chain of food banks has been completed: the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry has received a \$37,000 CETA grant to establish a food bank, as part of the national system, to serve Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga and Tompkins counties. The Southern Tier Community Food Bank will receive and distribute food received from the national system, as well as provide local coordination and develop local sources of food. The food collected will be distributed to the "food cupboards" in the area, to social service agencies, and to the congregate meal sites, such as senior citizen nutrition centers.

Thirty representatives of such programs attended a workshop at the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry Feb. 19 to hear about the new system.

Father Neil Miller, STOSM director, said that "there are hungry people and wasted food," and the food bank is designed to "bring the two together."

Walter Kronicz, program director, told the workshop participants of his efforts to date with local food processors. The possible donation of loaves of bread which are of incorrect size, but otherwise perfect, was one example of how the food bank will work. Such donations could produce more bread than one food cupboard or even county could use effectively; but with a five-county distribution system, it will be possible to maximize the use of such donations.

Sister Rosaria Hughes, the STOSM program developer who wrote the successful proposal, explained the need for such a program, noting the impact of inflation on both low and moderate income families.

The grant is for one year, and Sister Rosaria said that she is already looking for funding for future years. The program also will be heavily dependent on volunteers.

Currently the program is operating from St. Peter and Paul School, while efforts are made to find a permanent program site.

In addition to Kronicz, the food bank has a secretary and a driver, who will be able to pick up donated food.

Panel Listens to Testimony Supporting Welfare Increase

By Martin Toombs
 Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — Recipients, social service professionals and religious ministers testified in support of an increase in the basic public assistance grant before a panel headed by Bishop Matthew H. Clark at the Chemung County Infirmary Feb. 23.

The hearing gathered statements in support of an increase for Bishop Clark to take with him when he meets with state legislators from the diocese this month.

One of those legislators, state senator William T. Smith (R-Big Flats), sent a representative to the hearing to deliver a statement opposing an increase.

While recipients and human service workers described the difficulty caused by the inadequacy of the current grants, charges also were leveled about delays and broken promises which the recipients encounter in the dealings with the Social Service Departments.

One recipient from Tioga County told of a broken promise for fuel aid which resulted in her family having no coal, and no money to buy any, two days before Christmas. She credited the Human Development Committee of St. James Church, Waverly, with getting her family through the holidays.

Speaking as a former recipient, she said that she is "very happy, very happy" to have gotten out of the program Feb. 15. She commented that "I can't believe that anybody would really want to be on it."

Mary Ann Price of CIDS, Elmira, noted problems her agency has seen. The grant's inadequacy, she said, means that some families are unable to adequately clothe their children, or do not have appropriate furniture for child care. She spoke to "urge you to support in every way possible" a grant increase.

Nancy Palmer, a Schuyler weatherization worker, told of a 56-year-old man who has suffered a heart attack, and has been ordered by his doctor not to exert himself. But she reported that the support he is

receiving is too low to live on, and he intends to find a job, and take his chances with another heart attack.

She also told of a mother whose two daughters had to be sent to live with relatives because the support she received was insufficient.

A Schuyler County recipient commented that it is impossible for her to get a job, as she doesn't have the money to pay for transportation to interviews, or to pay a babysitter while she's gone.

Speakers also scored the low shelter allowances, which mean that many families have to make the rest of the rent payment from the amount that is supposed to cover other expenses.

An aide to Senator Smith, William Woodhull, read Smith's statement opposing the increase. It repeated Smith's claims that although the basic grant has not changed since 1974, the other programs benefiting the poor have grown and therefore an increase is not needed.

He also stated that the higher cost of Medicaid should be considered an increased benefit to those on public assistance. Welfare expenses, Smith said in the statement, also should be considered in light of the declining number of taxpayers in the state.

Panelist Rev. Stephen Lane of Corning asked Woodhull if Smith's concern wasn't with finance and taxation rather than providing adequate support. Woodhull responded that Smith considered both issues.

Robert Toft, the Tioga Commissioner of Social Services, commented in his testimony that he was concerned about Smith's attitude. He stated his wish that Smith would work to find ways to help the poor, rather than reasons not to.

Toft testified in favor of the increase, and called for higher shelter allowances as well. He also stated that of the \$4.5

million in benefits paid out by his department, \$2.5 million of it supports persons in nursing homes and not those usually thought of as on welfare.

The state's failure to recognize the need for persons in rural areas to have a car also causes hardships, he said.

Following the testimony, Bishop Clark thanked those who attended the hearing, and especially those who had spoken. He commented that a nation can be judged by how it cares for its needy, including the poor, the elderly, and the unborn, "people who are unable to speak for themselves."

"The increase issue must be rooted in human dignity," he said, not fiscal issues. The legal and financial side must be considered, but "in a society of our affluence," it is a disgrace that there are "children without adequate food, clothing, health care."

"We're in a miserable condition," he said, "if we can't stretch ourselves to do this."



One young player takes a bead on the basket, which is a long way up for these kindergarten and first grade boys. Baskets were scarce, but the players and their parents enjoyed the action.

Emphasis Put on Participation

Elmira — The sounds at the basketball game in St. Patrick's gym Feb. 21 were a bit unusual.

Calls of "pull up your socks" could be heard from the fans, and, going against practice, the referees were telling the players to "cover your man."

Also unexpected; the coaches on the sidelines were telling their players to "dribble the ball," something which they often forgot to do, and which the referees never called.

The game was unorthodox, but was tailor-made for the kindergarten and first grade players in it. An although they didn't score often, with the final being 8 to 6, they and their parents enjoyed the action.

Feb. 21 was the final day of

a 14-Saturday recreational basketball program at St. Patrick's, which involves 80 to 90 boys and girls from St. Patrick's and surrounding parishes.

Bob Devitt, who heads the program, noted that they stress fundamentals in their weekly sessions, and then give the players an opportunity to scrimmage among themselves. Only on the final Saturday do they divide into teams, put on jerseys, and compete. The kindergarten-first grade game was the first of six that afternoon.

Participation is a key to the program; Devitt said that the length of the periods of each game was based on the number of players on each team.

The final game of the day pitted the sixth grade girls from the recreational program

against the CYO "B" team, which consists of sixth grade boys. In probably the most hard-fought competition of the day, the teams finished four six-minute periods tied at 25. The girls went ahead in the overtime, but two driving layups by the boys keyed their 31-28 win. It was the boys' better shooting ability which overcame the girls' size and quickness advantage.

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Parishes Announce Lenten Programs

Corning — St. Mary's and St. Patrick's Education Committees are jointly sponsoring a Lenten series titled "Reach Out — Touch Somebody," open to teenagers and adults.

Five speakers will headline the programs, which will be given on five Thursdays during Lent. All programs will begin at 7:30 p.m.; the first three will be in the AV Room at Corning Catholic School South, with the final two programs taking place at St. Patrick's School.

Father Philip Billotte, St. Patrick's associate, will begin the series with a talk on "Hurt and Loss" on Thursday, March 12, at Corning Catholic School South.

Day of Prayer To Be March 6

Corning — The Corning Church Women United's observance of the World Day of Prayer will be from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Friday, March 6, at the First Congregational Church, Pulteney and Pritchard streets, Corning.

The program, written by

Sister Barbara Brennan of St. Mary's House of Prayer will conduct the second session, titled "Drift and Search," Thursday, March 19.

On Thursday, March 26, Patricia and Ray Defendorf will lead a program they've titled "Experience Love." The program will involve the Celebrate Life singing group which Defendorf directs.

On Thursday, April 2, the program shifts to St. Patrick's, when Father Michael Hogan, St. Mary's pastor, speaks on "Renewal."

The final program, at St. Patrick's, will be a talk on "Commitment" to be given by Father Lewis Brown, Religious Education Department director for the diocese.

women of American Indian tribes, deals with people's relationship with the earth.

As part of the program, Jenny Monore of the Rockwell-Corning Museum, which specializes in western art, will speak.

Prayer Evening Scheduled

Watkins Glen — An Evening of Fellowship and Prayer sponsored by the St. Mary's Prayer Group has been scheduled for 7 p.m., Thursday, March 12, at the St. Mary's Parish Center.

Guest speaker will be Sal Ruriani, who will present a spiritual reflection titled "Giants vs. Grasshoppers." Ruriani is active in the Catholic Charismatic movement. Interested persons are welcome.

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