

RAP AROUND

Diocesan High Schools Act to Soften Benefit Cuts

By Joan M. Smith

A bulwark of the American Dream has been dented. Social Security benefits, a financial mainstay of retirees and others, have been cut. Throughout the stir caused by these cuts the focus has been on the elderly and the financial threat posed to them. But among those others whose benefits are being cut, are students, and as Ed Boland, Aquinas senior, pointed out in his Jan. 20 Speaking Out, the budget cut was poorly timed and students were not informed of the cut.

The cut most affecting certain students is the gradual phasing-out of benefits to those attending college or other post-secondary schools. Under the old law, unmarried full-time students could get payments until they reached 22 if a parent, who had worked long enough under Social Security, retired, became disabled, or died.

New legislation, passed last August and due to go into effect in July, is phasing out these benefits. For a student to continue receiving these benefits he has to be full-time, 18-22 years of age, at a college or other approved post-secondary school before May. Benefits may be paid until the student finishes school, reaches 22 years of age, marries, or through April 1985, whichever comes first. However, the benefits will be reduced by 25 percent each year starting with the September 1982 check, until they are completely eliminated.

These changes caused a dilemma for this year's high school seniors who are eligible under the Social Security Act. If they remained in high school until June graduation they would forego benefits that were to be used in furthering their education. Yet, how could they attend college when they had six months left of high school? Early graduation is not a policy of the Catholic high schools, but administrators acted to make arrangements allowing these students to continue receiving the benefits. The schools devised methods for doing so, and although varied, if their

requirements are met, these students attending college in what would be their last semesters in high school, will graduate with their classmates this June.

"We did not change our policy about no early graduations," said Sister Barbara Weyand, RSM, assistant principal at Cardinal Mooney High School. "We made arrangements with the colleges."

These arrangements include Mooney's acceptance of health, English, and gym college credits as high school credits. Nineteen Mooney students began their college courses at Nazareth, Monroe Community and Brockport colleges on Jan. 18.

According to Father Joseph Moffatt, principal of Aquinas, eleven students are attending courses at MCC and the University of Rochester. Aquinas requires them to complete their theology courses on an independent study program, take their January high school exams, and pass their first college semester subjects.

Students at Our Lady of Mercy are also required to complete their theology courses on an independent

basis, and at St. Agnes students have to complete theology, English and physical education courses.

Bishop Kearney's arrangement differs in that the students are participating in a dual-enrollment with MCC whereby they attend religion, physical education and English classes at BK, daily, until 10:45 a.m. They then go to MCC for their college classes. They also are writing their high school January exams.

Brother Brian Walsh, BK principal, said the college courses the students are taking are considered as the electives they would have taken in their final semesters at BK.

There is no denying that these Social Security changes have rearranged lives and goals but, through the action of the diocesan schools as well as student willingness to take on added academic responsibility, a crisis was avoided.

Students and parents wanting more information about the new law can contact the Social Security Office at 263-6200, and request the pamphlet, Social Security Checks for Students, 18-22.

Health, Creativity A Part of School

On Jan. 14, Anthony Ferrara's Health class, along with the American Heart Association, conducted a blood pressure screening for the faculty and students at Aquinas. Senior Tom McHale felt that it was beneficial for the students because it gave them an opportunity to realize the importance of keeping track of their blood pressure.

Mrs. Rosica's freshman English class developed a newspaper for the Middle Ages. For an assignment the class read "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," and then decided to issue a newspaper using their imaginations. The newspaper

gives an idea of what it could have been like to live in the sixth century.

Editors for the paper were John DeCarolis, Pasquale Iannoli, Brian Jakabowski and Randy Oleski.

John Rosica, a senior, has been nominated by Congressman Frank Horton to compete for an appointment to the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Rosica is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Anthony J. Rosica. Dr. Rosica is a local optometrist and Mrs. Rosica is a Spanish and French instructor at Aquinas.



Winner's Circle

RapAround weekly will run a photo of a group of students taken somewhere in the diocese. One person will be circled and if that person brings the clipping to the Courier-Journal before noon of the Tuesday following our publication date, he or she will receive \$5. This week's photo was taken at Nazareth during an assembly. The person circled should bring the clipping to Joan M. Smith, Courier-Journal, 114 South Union St., by noon, Tuesday, Feb. 2, to receive \$5.

Equal Time

Why is it important to have a plural educational system in the United States?
AQUINAS

CHRIS AFFRONTI
Freshman
forensics

"I think we should have a freedom of choice. If there were just one system you would have to attend it, whether you wanted to or not. If you feel you find a quality education in the private sector you should be able to go to the school you want. The important thing is that the freedom of choice is there."

DAVE WEHNER
Senior
Maroon & White editor

"It's important to have the private schools for those who practice their religion. Their parents may want them to go to a Catholic school where they'll be able to practice as well as learn more about their religion. The advantage of the public school system is that the kids who don't want a religious environment have an alternate choice. I don't think the private schools will disappear. With parent and alumni support, the private schools should be able to keep it together."

GEORGE BROCK
Junior

"A person should have a choice. People should have that choice of sending their children to private schools. People tend to think alike if there is only one system of education. With two systems there is a variety of thought through learning."

MIKE CERAME
Junior

"I think people like a choice of what schools they want to go to and what type of education they want to receive. If they want to have the discipline of the private school sector, it's important for them to have that freedom of choice in the system."

JOHN HAIGHT
Senior
boxing

"A plural education system gives a person that doesn't have much money an opportunity, in the public sector, to receive the same education as everyone else. It also gives the person the choice to go to a school that is related to his or her upbringing. It's definitely important to have the freedom of choice. Prices, however, keep going up in private schools so there may be more people going to public schools because of the economic situation."

MARK MARSHALL
Freshman

"It is important because you have the choice to go to schools where there is discipline. In the public sector the kids are there because the law says they have to be there. Kids in the private schools are there because they, along with their parents, want to be there, and they have the choice to do this. The private schools will go under because the parent support will keep them going because they want the choice of education for their children."

MIKE BONANNO
Sophomore
football

"If parents want to send their kids where they receive discipline in the schools, they should have that freedom of choice. I don't think the private schools will go under because the parents will support their choice, because they feel it is important to have that freedom of choice."

ED BENSON
basketball

"I think people should have a choice of what type of school they want to go to. Having a two-school system gives a variety of education which leads to various ways of thinking."

Being a Parent 'Is Tough'

Nazareth Academy sociology students heard about a new concept in family care when Sister Patricia Frisk from the Family Resource Center spoke to them recently. The center, located on the corner of Parsells and Webster avenues, offers a model for preventive services to families.

According to school sources, Sister Patricia related the premise that, if people in the U.S. really value the concept of family, they need to focus on more support for parents. The program at the Family Resource Center consists of several components: parenting, education, drop-in services, home visiting, respite child care, and information and counseling.

Sister Patricia and Carolyn Mickelm began working on the concept in 1979. They

attended workshops and visited centers similar to the concept which they had in mind. Finally, after much research and work, they received a government grant. With that in hand, they approached Father James Callan of Corpus Christi parish who provided a storefront. Several parishioners pitched in to transform it into what it is today.

"Parenting is tough," said Sister Patricia. "No matter

where you live, being a parent is one of the toughest challenges you'll face," she told the students. She invited all of them to visit the center. "It's a prototype of what should be a common sight in the near future."


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