

Reflections on an All-too-Short Summer

By Michael Walker
President
Rochester Federation of
Catholic School Parents

On the last day of school in June, my children danced with glee. "Great! Nearly three months of vacation! What are we going to do tomorrow?"

"Oh, we'll think of something," I say. "Relax. Enjoy your vacation."

"Can we put the pool up?"

"Sure, why not!" Now's the time for fun. Our Rochester Federation duties are winding down, the last newsletter is out (even though I can still taste the stamps).

The pool at our house is of a 12-footer — just big enough to require a filter, chemicals and all the usual paraphernalia. I put my 14-year-old in charge while I look out occasionally from the family room window. Lo and behold, something is wrong.

"Help! The liner is leaking!"

Time for a family conference. Should we buy a new liner, a new pool, or (as I voted) scrap the whole thing? We decided to invest in water-proof tape. Fifteen rolls of tape later, the pool was assembled and kids were gleefully paddling about in it.

Ah, it should be an easy summer, and a long Fourth of July weekend is coming up. The only thing we in the Rochester Federation have to worry about is the Marathon for Catholic Schools to be held in October. (That's a long way off!) Also, we need to collect the letters from our latest push for tuition tax credits. Letters in support of tuition tax credits were to be sent by parents to the schools and

then to us to be forwarded to Washington at the appropriate time. We had some discussion about where these letters were going to be stored until that appropriate time arrived. I crazily volunteered my basement. After making this commitment, I hoped for a full basement and was somewhat disappointed when only one quarter of the area was used for this worthy purpose.

In the midst of this excitement, my wife decided it was high time for some redecorating in our home. I protested, saying, "Gosh, we just did that!" She tactfully reminded me that was 15 years ago. "Okay, where should we put the furniture while we scrub, paint, wallpaper, etc.?"

"Why not in the basement?"

"Okay. Sounds good."

"Of course, our old furniture should probably be replaced, too."

"Okay. Let's buy some new furniture. The old stuff could go in the basement permanently." I just hope the appropriate time doesn't arrive to send those letters to our congressmen and senators because I have the feeling that we may not be able to get to them at this point. Ah, well. On Fourth of July weekend I can relax.

If you ever have had the occasion to call the Rochester Federation, I'll bet you picture an efficient office with secretaries hurrying about, typewriters clacking, etc. "Headquarters," however, is my home. If you called during this past summer, we were very lucky just to find the phone!

We have a little vacation to look forward to around the first of August. It should be lots of fun. Whoops! I'd better get those letters out to the Marathon chairpersons before we think of vacation. I telephone to make sure our arrangements have been made with the city for the use of the parks for our marathon.

"Oh, he is out of town — out of the country, in fact. He will be back at the end of July."

"Oh. Okay. Thank you." I try not to bite my fingernails.

It's August now and vacation time — just a few days away from the home-front. "Let's go! Ah, yes. Isn't this relaxing!" Vacations always go too fast. Oh, well. I really wanted to get home and tie into those jobs crying to be finished. I'd better check right away with our Marathon committee — we need to set up a meeting.

"Oh my gosh!" one youngster shouts. "Disaster with the pool!" More patching tape, more filling. I vote again to scrap the whole thing.

"No, we can fix it. We can hang in there for just a few more weeks."

"Okay," I say.

Gee, my wife is talking about a new roof yet before the summer is over. I have hardly seen her lately, she's been so busy. Her theory is to keep the kids busy during the summer — that way they stay out of mischief. The only catch is that Mom then has to run a taxi service. "Taxi leaves in five minutes!" she calls from the kitchen.

Another telephone call for the Federation. It's a minor

crisis. "Where have you been?" the caller asks.

"Oh, I've just been hanging around here all summer. We had a short vacation. Nothing much is happening."

Wonder if I could sell some of those antiques in the basement. They should bring in a fortune. Well, maybe pay for the roof.

My 14-year-old is moping around. The infamous pool is too small for him to swim in, but the taxi transports him to swim classes which must meet at least seven days a week. Things are boring, and (horrors!) he'll be back in school in a matter of a few weeks, do I realize that?

Yes, I do. I also realize time

is running out. We need a September newsletter, — this Courier-Journal article, more work on the marathon and a hall for our kick-off meeting (I'd better check on that!).

"Could you play tennis with me, Dad?" my son asks

"Sure, but I'm not certain we can find the racquets."

"Yeah, I think I know where they are. They're in the basement."

"Well, good luck!" (Darn,


he found them!) "Okay. We'll play a little tennis."

Where has the summer gone, we all ask. I'm not sure. Time certainly passed quickly.

"Maybe we can still squeeze in just a little mini-vacation before school starts," my wife suggests.

"I wouldn't count on it," I reply. "Maybe fall will be nice and calm, but I wouldn't count on that either!"

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Organization Formed To Push Tax Credits

Albany — A broad-based coalition of parents, educators and religious bodies in New York State has been formed to support tuition tax credits.

Saying that the right of parents to guide their child's "intellectual, moral and spiritual development" has been declared paramount by the Supreme Court, the Coalition for Tuition Tax Credits adds that exercising that right too frequently depends on parents' financial means.

"No right called 'fundamental' should depend on the ability of citizens to afford

it," the coalition says. The poor and middle class are frequently settling for "no choice at all" because of the high costs of education.

The coalition cites the decline of 300,000 in nonpublic school enrollment in this state from 1965 to 1980 — more than twice the rate of decline in school-age population statewide, it said.

"Tuition tax credits should be supported," the coalition stated in a news release, "because for many parents it will mean the difference between a choice and no choice."

"Public schools do a commendable job," the organization says, "but they do not provide for everyone's needs.

The coalition states that nonpublic school education provides savings for the state's taxpayers. The 580,000 students in nonpublic schools save the state more than \$2 billion yearly, the coalition says.

Coalition members include parents, teachers and administrators from the various nonpublic school groups in New York State.

Aquinas

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate the Mass of the Holy Spirit for the student body and faculty at Aquinas Institute, Friday, Sept. 17. Other immediate dates of note at the school are Sept. 22, the

kickoff for the annual magazine drive, and Oct. 16, the official dedication of Stolze Field, home of the Little Irish.

When Aquinas opens its doors Sept. 8, 160 young women will enter as students, the first coeds in the history of the institution.

Mooney

Cardinal Mooney High School will host its 14th annual Paper Drive on Saturday, Oct. 9. The event is sponsored by the school's Action for People Association (AFPA).

On that day, papers can be taken to the school parking

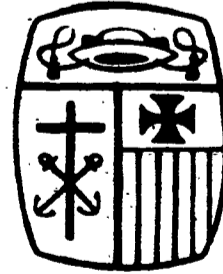
lot, or picked up free of charge by Mooney students.

Among other activities sponsored by the AFPA this year are a Halloween party for the children of St. Joseph's Villa and a Valentine party for the golden agers of Greece.

Many improvements were made to Aquinas' Dewey Avenue campus over the course of the summer. Girls' locker rooms and showers have been constructed, boys' lockers and sports offices have been reconstructed, and girls' lavatory facilities have been remodelled. A new chaplain's office will be on the first floor, and a new nurse's station is on the second floor. Architect for the work is David Miller.

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Open House: Thursday, October 28 — 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Entrance Exam: Saturday, January 8