

# Deficit forces

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But after a look at the parish's school assessment for next year, St. Mary's finance committee advised the pastor, Father Richard M. Murphy, to write Bishop Matthew H. Clark, saying that the parish could not afford the assessment and was contemplating pulling out of the system.

Shortly afterward, with approval from St. Patrick's parish council, Father Davis also wrote to the bishop "seconding Father Murphy's sentiments.

"I said I didn't see our way clear to supporting the system as currently organized and asked for some solution that could be worked out to maintain a full K-8 Catholic school system," Father Davis said. "I was perfectly willing that St. Vincent DePaul's stay open, providing it would be without prejudice to any child in Corning who wanted a Catholic education."

Bishop Clark then called all three pastors — Fathers Murphy and Davis, as well as St. Vincent's pastor, Father Robert C. MacNamara — to present their dilemma at a May 14 meeting with diocesan education and finance staff.

On Tuesday, May 27, the group met again in Geneva, where an agreement was reached to consolidate the schools. All three pastors agreed to commit their parishes to the system for an initial five years.

"The bishop wanted us to concur in the plan, which I believe I can say we did," Father Davis said.

Later that day, pastors announced the decision to school board members, the three parish council presidents, Andrea and staff members of the two schools. Andrea immediately drafted a letter to parents which was distributed on Wednesday, May 28.

She also met personally with nearly 40 parents of North students when the parents came to order school uniforms for next year. "They were disappointed and saddened," she said, "but the feeling I got was that many would continue to support Catholic education."

On Thursday night, that disappointment was vented at a meeting of St. Vincent DePaul's Parish Council. Parishioners asked why they were led to believe the decision was theirs if it was not.

"I think the main thing was the surprise," Father MacNamara said. "But it (parishioners' reaction) was actually much milder than I expected."

Ironically, the majority of the students in the Corning system come from St. Vincent DePaul Parish. St. Vincent's school building alone, however, could not accommodate all the students in the system.

"We could have made it as a parish school," Father MacNamara said. "But what's that saying to the Catholic community?"

Raising tuition to erase the deficit was another consideration, particularly since Corning's tuition is among the lowest four percent of schools throughout the diocese. But in their current five-year plan, the school boards had agreed not to raise tuition more than 15 percent per year.

"The savings had to be dramatic," Father MacNamara said. "Parents would have been scared off by the amount of raise we would have needed," Father Davis added.

"I know it's a sacrifice on their (St.



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Acknowledging that closing the school is "a painful experience," Father Robert C. MacNamara, pastor of St. Vincent DePaul Parish, said "the word healing has to be heard by people."



Despite people's sadness and disappointment over the closing of Corning North, Sandra Andra, principal of both schools, is optimistic that most parents will continue to support Catholic education.



Although St. Vincent DePaul Parish has no concrete plans for the Corning North school building as yet, Father MacNamara is "enthused about some of the things we can do for church on the northside that we could never do before."

Vincent's) part, but nobody loses," he explained. "If all three and maybe even four parishes (with the possible inclusion of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Painted Post) really get behind it and pool their resources, we can do it."

Corning's Catholic schools first consolidated in 1971 with the merger of two southside schools and the closing of St. Patrick's school building. At that time, the two remaining schools were renamed Corning North and South.

In 1972/73, junior high students from North moved to South because of irregular class sizes.

According to the long-range planning committee's recommendation, the two school boards will now merge into one, consisting of the principal, three pastors and three representatives from each parish (including at least one parish council member).

The committee also recommended a gradual rise in tuition to adhere to diocesan guidelines — 40 percent of the school's budget from parish assessment, 40 percent from tuition, and 20 percent from outside fund raising.

With that goal in mind, Father MacNamara is cautiously optimistic. "Somebody from St. Vincent's has to rise to the level of saying 'There are no winners or losers; that we all win by keeping Catholic education alive,' he said. "The word healing has to be heard by our people. This is a painful experience, and many other parishes in the diocese have come through it.

"It could be devastating, but it could also finally pull the parishes together to overcome that old lady 'parochialism,'" he added.

## AQUINAS INSTITUTE THEN AND NOW



From the 1930s to the 1950s, music at Aquinas was synonymous with **Raymond J. Hasenauer**. During the 22 years he spent at the school, from 1932 when he arrived, to 1954 when he retired, quality music became inseparably a part of Aquinas. Hasenauer directed the orchestra; marching band; glee club; and jazz band, "The Swingsters." In addition, he assisted vaudeville, shows and musicals. In 1934 he composed the words and music of "March on Aquinas," the school song. Today, the student body, 804 boys and girls, still sings that spirited song at pep rallies and games.

A protege of Hasenauer at Aquinas, **Charles A. Klueber '36**, first heard the Aquinas band as a youth and "got hooked on the tuba." Hasenauer taught him to play the instrument. He remembered well how difficult it was both to play the upright tuba and sidestep streetcar tracks while marching. Klueber is still playing the tuba in a band today, The Crazy Firemen.

Present director of the Aquinas band is **Mr. Brian Coughlin** who continues the tradition of **Udall, Fabrizio, Eyon, Martin** and many other directors after Hasenauer. The program, today is as variegated as in the 1930s, consisting of concert, select, beginners and jazz bands, plus a color guard of 35 girls.

During Coughlin's tenure, the band has marched in over 40 parades. National honors came in 1984 in the St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City. The entire band and color guard traveled to Disneyworld in Florida over Easter break for parades and a performance at Epcot.

The biggest change in the music program, Coughlin believes, is the field band and the routines it performs during football-games' half times and in competition with other bands. On Sunday, October 5, 1986, Aquinas will be hosting a one-day competition with 10 field bands from around the state. Coughlin feels that such routines are more challenging to members as the music is more difficult; the drills involving the color guard are more precise. There is also a greater sense of satisfaction for the band in performing a work that is pleasing to both eyes and ears of an audience.

Coughlin's greatest satisfaction is that many of the graduating seniors from his band, like Klueber, will be continuing to enjoy their music after Aquinas, to study it as a career, or to play it as an avocation.

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