

# Group offers participants 'fun after 55'

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — "Oh yeah, yeah."  
"It's your play."  
"We got skunked."

The air was filled with talk and laughter Nov. 19 in a room at the former St. Salome's School, 4282 Culver Road.

Approximately 45 people sat around tables playing card games — poker, Uno, bridge, euchre and pinochle. They had just finished a Thanksgiving lunch of turkey sandwiches and pumpkin pie.

As they played cards, people chatted not only about the games, but also gardening, trips and neighbors.

The session was the monthly gathering of the Fun After Fifty-Five group at St. Salome's Parish.

For the past 10 years, group members have met for cards and a light meal, or for day trips to such places as Niagara Falls, Alleghany State Park or Auburn's Seward House.

"It gives you an afternoon to get to be with nice people," observed 81-year-old Jerry Bonfiglio, one of the poker players.

The group formed a decade ago after the parish's pastor, Father Albert Delmonte, called a meeting to discuss starting a parish program for seniors, recalled Rita Doran, the organization's current president.

"(Father Delmonte) said there should be a group for social reasons for seniors, not for fundraising because we had paid our dues," recalled Doran, one of the meeting's participants.

The group's only requirement — beyond age, of course — is that members pay a dollar when they arrive for the monthly card party, Doran noted.

What also sets Fun After Fifty-Five apart from such groups as mens' and womens' clubs is that while those organizations deal with concerns and activities for people of all ages, this one is just for people over 55, Doran said.

Meanwhile, she added, unlike other events for seniors — such as lectures or information sessions — the program



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Members of the Fun After Fifty-Five group at St. Salome's Parish in Rochester have been hosting a monthly card party in the former school building for the past 10 years. (From left) Rose DiSalva, Ralph Fritz, Dorothy Fritz, the group's first president, and Nettie Gatto play a round of '35.'

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Rita Doran  
Fun After Fifty-Five group president



Rita Doran, president of the Fun After Fifty-Five group, concentrates during a game of euchre. She and about 45 other members participated in the group's Nov. 19 party.



A basket of extra supplies for the party is brought along just in case.

allows members to be actively involved.

"The people don't want to come and just be talked to," she observed.

The meetings also help to keep seniors from becoming isolated, Doran added.

"As we get older, so many of our friends die or move away," Doran said. "You don't want to just sit home and watch television."

Dorothy Schoenberger echoed that view at one of the pinochle tables.

"It gives you companionship, somebody to talk to besides the cat," noted the 80-year-old Schoenberger.

In addition, Doran noted, "It's a way of supporting people in this group, too." **Continued on next page**

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