

# St. Mary's School stays K-8 for next school year

## Supporters close \$60,000 deficit

By Lee Strong  
Senior staff writer

CANANDAIGUA — Thanks to fundraising efforts and promissory notes that helped to close a deficit estimated at nearly \$60,000, St. Mary's School will keep open its sixth through eighth grades for the 1994-95 school year.

The school, located at 16 Gibson St., had faced the prospect of closing these grades due to the deficit and enrollment problems, according to Laurie Frykholm, St. Mary's principal.

That deficit occurred in large part from falling revenues from bingo games following a parish decision last summer to ban smoking, Frykholm explained. School officials had budgeted \$60,000 in revenue from the games, but by December, 1993 — due to falling attendance — the games had netted only \$6,000. The games ran a deficit during some weeks as well.

Smoking was restored last month, and, according to Candace Phillips, head of the school committee, attendance at the games has been increasing and is approaching levels enjoyed before the ban was implemented.

Meanwhile, a May 14 concert in Canandaigua performed by Phylis Contestable and Alan Jones raised approximately \$10,000 for the school. A cookbook scheduled to come out this fall is expected to bring in another \$10-15,000, Frykholm estimated.

To help offset the balance of the debt, St. Mary's parishioners have also pledged to back as much as \$40,000 in promissory notes for a line of credit at Canandaigua National Bank.

In addition, a subcommittee of the parish finance committee has been created to work more closely with the school's finance committee, and the school is in the process of developing a marketing plan to help bolster enrollment.

Enrollment for the 1993-94 school year is 165, Frykholm reported. In addition, 30 children are enrolled in St. Mary's preschool program. Currently, 161 children are enrolled for grades K-8 next year, she reported. Preschool enrollment is still taking place.

Father Walter Wainwright, pastor of St. Mary's Parish, had said that the school needed to operate in the black or reconfiguration would need to take place. The pastor, who was away on vacation and unavailable for comment,

cautioned in the June 5 parish bulletin, "It should be stated, for the record, that this is a one-time only solution."

St. Mary's financial problems surfaced last fall while the school committee was preparing a December report on the state of the school to the diocese, Phillips explained. Committee members discovered not only the revenue shortfall from bingo games, but also a drop in enrollment in some grades — especially at the junior-high level.

"It was pretty simple," Phillips said. "We just didn't get a lot of warning about it."

The smoking ban had been implemented last summer, Phillips explained. The parish did so after Monroe County

instituted a smoking ban and parish officials anticipated that Ontario County would eventually follow suit. However, other bingo games in the Canandaigua area where smoking was permitted began to draw people away from St. Mary's games.

Parish officials are currently looking at a number of fundraising ideas, Phillips said, although nothing has been finalized beyond the spring concert and the cookbook. In addition, a marketing team is helping develop a plan to better market the school in hopes of increasing the school's enrollment and retaining students.

As far as the line of credit, Phillips explained, parishioners have pledged

various amounts to help back the full \$40,000. That line of credit will only be used if fundraising efforts fall short and only to the degree that it is needed, she said.

During the process of dealing with the school's financial problems, diocesan officials regularly came to the school and the parish to offer assistance with curriculum and budgeting, Phillips said. "We had people from the diocese down sometimes weekly," she reported.

In the parish bulletin, Father Wainwright wrote that decisions concerning possible reconfiguration of the school for the 1995-96 school year would be made by March 31, 1995. That decision, he said, would be based on enrollment figures and the school's financial situation.

Frykholm acknowledged that she had been aware of some financial problems at the school when she was hired as principal in January, 1994, but not their magnitude.

Nevertheless, she expressed optimism over the various efforts to turn the school's financial picture around.

"We are very confident we will have a successful year next year," Frykholm said.

## Bishop addresses Knights



Lauren McFalls/Photo intern

Bishop Matthew H. Clark spoke at the Knights of Columbus District 102 quarterly meeting at Rochester's St. Philip Neri Church on June 6. After the opening address by Father Michael G. Upson, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Rochester, the meeting featured a 'town meeting' with the bishop in which evangelization efforts were discussed.

## Brian Buff pleads guilty to charge

ROCHESTER — Former Aquinas Institute teacher and administrator Brian C. Buff pleaded guilty June 7 to one count of third-degree sodomy for an incident in Rochester involving a 16-year-old male student at Catholic Central High School in Troy.

The plea is part of an agreement in which Buff will plead guilty to two other charges of third-degree sodomy in Rensselaer and Albany counties on July 1.

Each plea brings with it a sentence of one to three years in prison. The three guilty pleas will result in a sentence of three to nine years, according to Monroe County Assistant District Attorney Douglas A. Randall.

Buff's sentencing is scheduled for July 26 before State Supreme Court Justice

John D. Doyle, who is presiding over the cases in all three counties.

Buff originally faced multiple counts of sodomy, sex abuse, endangering the welfare of a child, conspiracy, and harassment in three counties for incidents involving two male students at Catholic Central High. He served as vice principal at Catholic Central High from September, 1991, to December, 1992.

He also faced charges involving an incident with a female office worker at Aquinas, where he served as associate director of development in 1993. He had previously served as a social studies teacher and drama director at Aquinas before he was director of recruitment and special events at Aquinas from July, 1988, to August, 1991.

— Lee Strong

## Concert set to benefit social ministry office

WATERLOO — Doug Stone, the Back Alley Boys, and Wes Earl and Aces High are scheduled to perform a benefit concert for Finger Lakes Social Ministry Friday, June 24, at 7 p.m. at the Seneca County Fairgrounds.

Tickets, which are on sale now for \$18, may be purchased at the following locations: Mainstreet Shop Centre, Waterloo; Finger Lakes Performing Arts Center, Canandaigua; Area Records, Geneva; and Record Town at the Finger Lakes Mall, Auburn.

## Parish dinner to mark final anniversary event

ROCHESTER — Ss. Peter and Paul Church, 720 W. Main St., will conclude its yearlong 150th anniversary celebration with a dinner at the Party House, 677 Beahan Road. The gala is scheduled for Friday, June 24, at 7 p.m.

All alumni and friends of the parish are invited. A 6:30 p.m. reception will precede the dinner. Tickets cost \$15 and are available at the church office until June 20.

Call 716/436-3110 for information.

## Free spaghetti supper offered at Tier church

ELMIRA — A free spaghetti supper sponsored by St. Patrick's Church will be held on Thursday, June 16. The supper will take place in the parish hall, located at 251 W. Clinton St., from 5 to 8 p.m.

This marks St. Patrick's seventh annual free spaghetti supper. All food is donated by parishioners. Last year's supper drew 676 people who consumed 277 pounds of spaghetti and 30 gallons of homemade sauce.

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