

Potsdam Schools Undergoing Changes Under 'Austerity' Spending

BY DR. CARLOS GUTIERREZ
Superintendent of Schools
 1979 saw a great deal of activity at Potsdam Central School, including many staffing and program changes. The system, in attempting to adjust to a declining enrollment mode, was unable to pass a full budget at the polls, and is now experiencing its first year on a contingency or "austerity" spending plan.

The pupil count dipped under 2,000 in kindergarten through grade 12 for the first time in over a decade (in 1969, it was 2,236). Voters approved separate propositions enabling the system to conduct interscholastic athletics, to buy buses and to purchase library books.

The driver education program, as conducted during the regular year, was dropped, as was one counselor position. Limited revenues from state and federal sources forced the district into a "buy for emergencies only" position in the spring. Escalating fuel and supply costs provided a second blow, and the system finished the fiscal year in June with the smallest balance on record.

Management
 The superintendent and a newly organized board of education began a new fiscal year in July with a series of aggressive responses to their own difficulties. The financial management of the district was placed in the hands of a newly-hired financial administrator, Garnold Hance, and an active board financial committee was appointed to work closely with Hance in laying the groundwork for firm expenditure planning and control. Accounts were transferred to a computerized system and a new budget format is growing out of work being done in this department.

The business manager is regularly attending statewide meetings to keep abreast of developments in school

Card Shop Recovering

POTSDAM — A mood just four days before Christmas dampened things quite a bit at the Village Card Shop, 45 Market St., but as 1980 begins things seem to be looking good, according to Pamela Aurette, the owner of the gift and card shop.

She is recovering from the flood which she said was apparently caused by burst pipes in an upstairs apartment, and is now looking forward to expanding her gift lines and possibly completing a store remodeling project begun two years ago.

The Village Card Shop carries Hallmark cards and products, stationery, crystal, glassware, jewelry, ceramics, candles, and wedding items. During 1979 Ms. Aurette became the sole owner of the business. She maintained part ownership since November of 1976.

Judy Josa is employed at the downtown Potsdam store.

Snell Equipment Now In 4th Year

POTSDAM — Now beginning its fourth year in business, Snell Equipment, a Kubota tractor and farm equipment dealership, has grown steadily since its modest beginnings.

A new 40- by 60-foot shop and showroom is near completion, service equipment has been added and a full inventory of tractors, implements and parts is now in stock. Incorporated in March 1979, with Phil and Kinga Snell as officers, Snell Equipment remains a family business dedicated to customer service and satisfaction.

Kubota tractors are all diesel, two and four wheel drive, and range from 12 horsepower up to the recently introduced "M" series of 47 to 80 horsepower.

The firm has sold over 40 Kubota tractors to homeowners, woodlot owners, strawberry growers and dairy farmers, colleges, a tree farm, a ski area, as well as towns and housing projects. Snell Equipment is also an authorized dealer of Woods mowers and blades and Howard rotary tillers.

Phil Snell sells and services Sealator forage and manure systems. Sealator sealed silos for the storage of haylage and high moisture grain are of glass lined steel construction and feature the efficient and low maintenance cost Laidig bottom unloader. Snell Equipment also offers Empire silos and silomatic unloaders and feeding systems.

Snell Equipment is located three miles from Potsdam on the Hewittville Road, out Pine Street from Potsdam or out the River Road from Norwood.

district money management. A clear division between fiscal and program management responsibility has been made by the superintendent, and board committees have been appointed to reflect a new management arrangement. The district's six administrators attended a management seminar during the summer at Clarkson College School of Management. This set the tone for a results-based management plan in which all are now involved. District goals are set jointly by the superintendent and the board. These form a superstructure under which each individual administrator sets goals for his or her part of the overall school operation. Progress checks are made and all involved are accountable to produce results.

Concurrently with these management changes, a board committee is doing a comprehensive policy review and updating. These revisions, together with new policy for new needs, form the basis for operating the school. An important factor in the "New Look" management is the format of the board meetings, an arrangement designed to stress information and action and to reduce distractions.

Program
 The district's three building principals working with the curriculum coordinator, have stressed the development of minimum competencies throughout the school program. The focus in 1979 has been on grade level promotion standards at Lawrence Avenue and on mathematics (now implemented through grade nine). A new program for emotionally handicapped pupils is in place at Lawrence Avenue under the auspices of the local BOCES. BOCES also operates, in cooperation with the local school, a similar program for older pupils at the Kingston Middle School. The elementary staff now contains an additional teaching team at grade three, resulting from a joining of efforts by two teachers who formerly taught strictly self-contained classes. The elementary principal is working with parent volunteers this year and is progressing toward the important goal of improved student behavior in the lunchroom and in the halls.

At the middle school, emphasis continues on keeping parents well-informed and involved with their children in a shared learning arrangement. Also, teachers are involved on an improved writing stan-

dards project which incorporates an analytical scale and a stressing of paragraph development. Teachers hold themselves accountable for results. A district goal of improved computer literacy finds considerable support in the work going on at AAK, beginning with the principal, who is involved in training himself and his staff through in-service experiences. The student-operated TV station, WAAK, went back on the air in '79, and is now operating a daily program as well as certain special productions.

An adaptive physical education program was begun at the senior high school for children with handicapping conditions. A part-time additional staff member has made this scheduling possible. Teachers in the other two buildings are sharing time to accommodate certain handicapped children in those buildings. Computer literacy improvement took a firm hold in the high school in 1979 with the installation of new equipment (federally-funded) and a growing interest among staff and students. Teachers in the district's three buildings are heavily involved in a county-wide curriculum improvement plan. Work in language arts, physical

education, mathematics and reading are ongoing. There are eight Potsdam teachers with coordinating responsibilities and over thirty who attend different phases and sections of this project. In addition to the internal efforts to improve program, teachers and administrators are working with two distinct board-citizen committees. These people are tackling two separate, sensitive program areas which have been identified as being in need of work: They are effective and improved use of the senior year, and the district's physical education and athletic programs, which are now under scrutiny, with reports to be forthcoming in the spring months.

Staffing
 Besides certain staffing reductions already mentioned, the Potsdam district saw certain staffing changes representing the loss of many years of service to the community. Marie Van Ness, a music teacher, John and Kay McMann, administrator and teacher of English respectively, and Ruth Haley, counselor, retired during 1979, taking with them a total of over 100 years of experience in Potsdam. Rene Bouchard resigned to accept a school superintendency in Alfred-Almond District

after serving six years in a difficult position. Dick Farrell and Bill Stephenson came in late '79 to help bridge the gap between high school principals. These two retired Massena administrators brought (temporarily) many years of experience with them. Garnold Hance, formerly business manager at Clifton-Fine Central, came on board in the spring of '79 prior to the start of a new budget calendar. William Lewkowitz, a science (chemistry) teacher, well known locally and statewide for his long service and high standards, left the district due to illness and is on sick leave into 1980. Jim Hendershot, Bob Regan and Joseph Liotta used sabbatical leaves during '79 for different purposes, under the terms of the district's teacher contract. Lyle Thomas and Francis Wickwire retired in 1979. They were two well-known people in the Transportation Department. Hilda Lindley from food services, as well as Edith Norman, business office and Una Frank, tax collector left the district.

Perhaps the "bus scare" of spring, '79 most typically represents the district's difficulties during a hectic year. This involved a school closing because too few buses were in condition to pass state inspection during one of the state's spot checks. Attention focused on a continuing need to develop and carry out scheduled replacement of equipment and maintenance needs. In late '79, with the resignation of the high school principal, the board and superintendents launched an intensive search for replacement in this vital post. Students, parents, teachers, administrators and board members were deeply involved. It is hoped that the appointment of William LeForester, an administrator from the Troy school system, as principal will signal and symbolize a shifting of gears and a commitment to new goals in the important decade ahead. The PCS staff and board join in pointing out that education is an investment in human capital, and is therefore our assurance of a better tomorrow.

D.L. Thomas Specializing In Remodeling Projects

POTSDAM — Durward L. Thomas, Certified Kitchen Designer and owner-proprietor of D.L. Thomas Kitchens and Baths, outer Market Street, Potsdam, founded that firm on Feb. 1, 1950.

Thomas started a plumbing, refrigeration and electrical wiring service in Dekalb Junction following his graduation from Canton ATC. He moved the business to Potsdam in 1955, to its present location. At that time heating and plumbing was the firm's main business, with kitchens as a side line.

In 1958 Thomas decided to specialize in kitchens in baths, and to continue the heating and plumbing service and repair business.

devote full time to kitchen and bath designing and remodeling.

"As kitchen and bath design specialists we plan, design and install all jobs, from the simplest countertop replacement to the complete addition of a room for a combination kitchen and family room," Thomas said.

The firm handles all details for the job, including planning, designing and installation of cabinets, countertops, appliances, accessories and any necessary heating, plumbing, venting, electrical wiring and carpentry.

For the do-it-yourselfer the firm will plan, design and supply the desired materials.

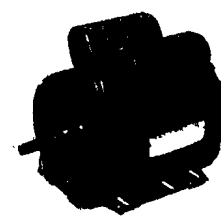
In addition to Thomas, the firm employs Ms. Jill M. Stoughton, CKD, as office manager, kitchen designer and salesperson, and Harry J. Doelger as carpenter-installer. Mrs. Ann Rheume is also employed as office and salesperson.

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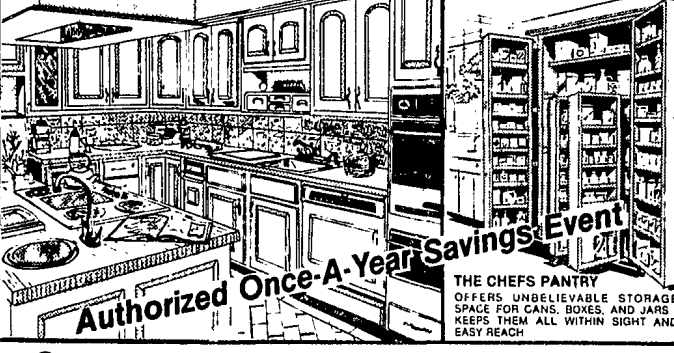
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