

St. Theodore's School in Gates recently held its first ever Career Day for primary and intermediate students. Pictured clockwise from left are: Renee Bovenzi, Paul Kleffer, Mary Jo Montemurro, Cassandra Kenny and Stephanie Dello.

Church schedules festival

CORNING — The parish festival at St. Vincent de Paul Church will take place June 1-2. Festival hours will run from 6 p.m. to midnight on Friday, and 1 p.m. to midnight on Saturday.

The festival will feature children's games and rides, adult games, crafts, food and more. The gala is open to the public.

Call 607/936-4688 for more information.

Corning churches to send Bibles to cities in Russia

CORNING — The Sister Cities Association is sponsoring a program to send Bibles to residents of Lvov, Corning's sister city in Russia.

The Bibles will come from Stuttgart and will be written in Ukrainian. Several Corning parishes, including St. Mary's Church, are hoping to send 50 Bibles by Pentecost.

Call 607/962-0422 for more information.

O'Hair rumor still making parish rounds

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

An old adage says, "Rumors are tumors — cut them out."

The Federal Communications Commission has tried every form of media "surgery" to kill persistent rumors about a supposed threat to religious broadcasting by well-known atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair, but none have worked.

According to the rumors, O'Hair — who was instrumental in getting prayer banned from public schools in the 1960s — has been granted a hearing on a petition that would ban religious broadcasting on television and radio. She supposedly collected 27,000 signatures on the petition identified as RM-2493.

But O'Hair had nothing to do with the petition, which, according to an FCC spokesman, was submitted to the commission by two men in 1974, and denied August 1, 1975. The case has been closed since that time.

Nevertheless, the FCC receives 400-500 phone calls and approximately 80,000 pieces of mail per month about the issue, according to Martha Contee, assistant chief of the commission's Consumer Affairs Office.

"We really have no sense of why it keeps going on," Contee said. "We've tried every mechanism that we could think of to get rid of the rumor, but it dies down for a while and then it just keeps resurfacing."

The rumor is now resurfacing in the Diocese of Rochester, where it has appeared in several parish bulletins — most recently the April 15 bulletin of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Hamlin.

According to Sister Mary Kay Ryan, SSJ, the parish's religious education coordinator, a parishioner brought her a leaflet about O'Hair's supposed attempt to ban religious broadcasting. Sister Ryan said she had heard of O'Hair previously, but not the rumor.

Sister Ryan took the information from the leaflet and put it in the bulletin. "I just put it in with a whole group of life issues," she noted.

The article in the bulletin included a request that parishioners write to the FCC. Sister Ryan noted that thus far, she had heard no reaction to the insert from parishioners.

The FCC may not be so fortunate. The information in the bulletin and the leaflet, which is in all likelihood still circulating, will probably mean more letters and calls to the federal agency. Contee pointed out that dealing with the deluge costs the government — and taxpayers — money.

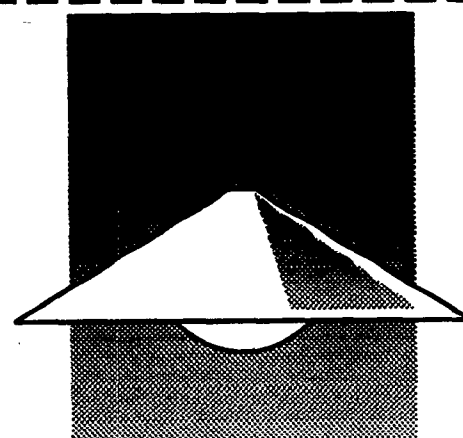
"A lot of our staff time is devoted to answering the calls and letters," Contee said. The agency receives so many inquiries that it has printed a fact sheet with information about the rumor.

Ironically, the FCC has no power to regulate religious broadcasting. On the fact sheet, the agency points out, "No federal law or regulation gives the FCC the authority to prohibit radio and television stations from presenting religious programs. The Communications Act (the law that established the FCC and defines its au-

thority) prohibits the commission from censoring broadcast material and from interfering with freedom of speech in broadcasting.

"The commission cannot direct any broadcaster to present, or refrain from presenting, announcements or programs on religion, and it cannot act as a judge of the wisdom or accuracy of such material. Broadcasters — not the FCC or any other government agency — are responsible for selecting the programming that is aired by their stations."

Garden & Home Improvements



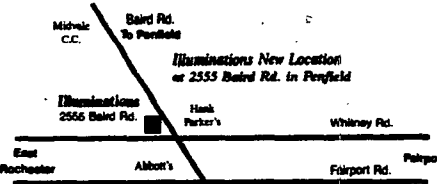
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RECOGNIZING ...

★ The Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry, which has received a grant from the state Department of Social Services to make exterior renovations to five homes built in 1987/88.

★ Gerald J. "Jerry" Flynn, chosen as the winner of the CHAMP — Cancer Hero of Merit Program — Award, presented by Cancer Action, Inc., in honor of his efforts on behalf of Rochester cancer agencies.

★ Alexandra I. Fernandez, a senior anthropology/international studies major at St. John Fisher College, named the winner of the 1990 Judy Weis Achievement Award for outstanding college women who demonstrate leadership, concern for the community, and voluntary involvement in public service.

★ A new member of the board of St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira, Dr. Joseph E. Calderone, who practices internal medicine and gastroenterology.

★ Colleen Cross, a 1986 graduate of Cardinal Mooney High School and Boston University student who serves in Student Food Rescue, a program which salvages more than 2,000 pounds of food for the needy each week from restaurants, bakeries and supermarkets.

★ Three Sisters of Mercy — Sisters Mary deChantal Fortune, Judith Heberle and Janet Wahl — who attended a national congregational meeting entitled "Catholic Health Ministry: Strategies for the Future" in late April at St. John's Mercy Medical Center in St. Louis.

★ St. John Fisher College students Michelle M. Curt, James S. Ely Jr., and Thomas Maciejewski, presented with Outstanding Adult Student Awards honoring their success in combining college study with family, career and community service responsibilities.