

Tier youth groups rock the boat on teen cruise

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

WATKINS GLEN — Seneca Lake was the picture of tranquility one beautiful late-June evening — with one major exception.

When Captain Bill's cruise boat came within view, it was the signal for peace-seeking sailboat enthusiasts to scurry for cover. Dozens of rockin' and rollin' teenagers were stomping so hard on the vessel's upper deck that they threatened to cave in the dance floor!

"That was wicked fun," 16-year-old Tom Ward exclaimed in the aftermath.

Ward, a member of the youth group at St. Margaret Mary Church in Apalachin, was one of about 140 teenagers and chaperons who participated in the Southern Tier Teen Cruise. A first-ever event held Tuesday evening, June 29, it attracted youth contingents from Roman Catholic parishes throughout the Tier.

After congregating at Watkins Glen's St. Mary of the Lake Church, 901 Decatur St. N., the throng hiked the few blocks through this peaceful village's streets to the Captain Bill's dock, located along Route 14 at the southern tip of Seneca Lake.

Once on board, participants spent the next three hours feasting on pizza and gyrating to popular tunes.

For event organizer Nancy Roy, youth minister at St. Mary's of the Lake, the outing fulfilled a longtime goal.

"This is like a dream of mine. Five years ago I brought six people, and I was thinking how nice it would be if we get all the parishes to do this together," said Roy. She planned the cruise along with Paul Raspa, youth minister at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Ithaca and All Saints Church in Lansing.

Roy explained that multi-parish events are good vehicles for teenagers to grow in their Catholic faith.

"We are one in community, and it's important for the kids to make connections," Roy acknowledged. "I've seen a lot of interaction, where kids aren't



Jason Chandler (from left), Monica Joy Desendorf, Bri Moss, Jenifer Moison, Andrea Remmert and Matt Tanneberger (middle) relax on the bow of the Colombia June 29, during the multi-parish youth cruise on Seneca Lake.

S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

staying just with people in their own parish."

Based on the success of this shindig, Roy said she hopes to stage another teen cruise on Captain Bill's next summer.

Julie Allison, who represented St. Patrick's Church, Elmira, said she felt the fun-filled cruise offered teens a break from the work-related nature of many parish youth-group activities.

"We've been doing fundraisers, and this was one of the first things that wasn't like that," the 15-year-old Allison commented. "It didn't seem like it was all church-related."

The excursion even gained approval on the international level. It got a big thumbs-up from Francia Palma, an 18-year-old exchange student from Panama, who went along for the ride with the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community youth group.

"We don't have a lake where I live. I like the view here, the people, the area — everything," Palma remarked.



Tom Ward (left) and Jody Hackett, both St. Margaret Mary Parish in Apalachin, enjoy a moment on the lower deck of the Colombia.

Wayland parish offers summer courses

WAYLAND — St. Joseph Church has planned two youth-oriented educational courses for this summer.

A reading camp will take place July 19-Aug. 12. The program is open to students of all reading abilities who have completed kindergarten through fourth grade. Each student will attend camp for two hours per week. To obtain an application, write to Alan Moore,

6932 Liberty Pole Road, Springwater, N.Y. 14560.

A two-week course on aircraft flying will be offered July 19-30. The sessions, which are open to children in grades 4-8, will be held three mornings per week. Call Jennifer Raftery at 716/335-2076 for details.

Both courses will be held at St. Joseph School, 209 Fremont St.



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