



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
 Vincent Moschetti (left), principal of All Saints Academy, and Father William V. Spilly, pastor of the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community, stand at the entrance to the bingo hall located at All Saints Academy's Denison Parkway building. Smoking has been banned inside the edifice since July 1.

Tier school's policy seeks breath of fresh air

By Mike Latona
 Staff writer

CORNING — St. Patrick's Church officials weren't just blowing smoke when they said they wanted to make changes surrounding Saturday-night bingo.

And because of these changes, bingo-players are no longer blowing smoke, either.

Beginning this past July 1, smoking is no longer allowed for bingo — or any other activities — at the former St. Patrick school building located at 274 Denison Parkway E. The action was precipitated by a decision earlier this year for the school to reopen so that it can accom-

modate an overflow of students at All Saints Academy, 158 State St.

Although there would be a gap of more than 30 hours between the conclusion of bingo on Saturday night and the beginning of Monday-morning classes, the threat of secondary-smoke, the exposure still exists for students and faculty, maintained Father William V. Spilly.

"You can smell it in the curtains, you're dealing with a kitchen facility, and you can see the smoke film on the windows," said Father Spilly, who serves as pastor of the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community.

Father Spilly is also a mem-

ber of the pastoral council at St. Patrick's Church — one of four churches in the Southern Tier cluster — which voted unanimously in May to eliminate smoking from bingo.

He said that even though bingo brings in \$50,000 annually for All Saints Academy, financial matters rated second on the priority list.

"We're doing this for the sake of the children and the good health of the people who come to this building," said Father Spilly.

"After weighing the two issues — our youngsters' health and \$50,000 for the church — it was decided to ban smoking in the buildings for ALL occa-

sions," stated a letter to the editor signed by the St. Patrick's pastoral council which appeared in the July 7 issue of the *Catholic Courier*.

Projected All Saints Academy enrollment for the 1994-95 school year is 328 in grades kindergarten through 8, and 55 in pre-school. The St. Patrick's building will accommodate pre-K and kindergarten students and be known as All Saints Academy at Denison Parkway, while the current All Saints building, located in the former St. Mary's school, will serve grades 1-8 and be called All Saints Academy at State Street.

According to James Rinefield, chief financial officer for

the Diocese of Rochester, St. Patrick's is the only diocesan church or school building where a complete no-smoking policy is currently being enforced. Rinefield noted that some bingo facilities are equipped with smoking and non-smoking rooms.

One other diocesan institution which recently attempted a smoking ban during bingo games was St. Mary's School in Canandaigua. However, after a severe drop-off in attendance and profits after the policy was begun in the summer of 1993, St. Mary's opted to once again allow smoking at bingo beginning this past May.

Father Spilly said he's aware of the potential attrition of bingo participants in Corning, but acknowledged that summer attendance at bingo has been about average since the ban went into effect.

"We're presuming there's not going to be a backlash. This could encourage people who are non-smokers to come to bingo," said the pastor.

Vincent Moschetti, who serves as All Saints Academy's principal, remarked that bingo participants who smoke should be able to endure this policy.

"If that little cigarette can control people to the point where they can't go somewhere for one or two hours, it doesn't seem like they have much self-control," said Moschetti.

Yet Father Spilly admitted that he has already received dissenting opinions from some bingo players. "Obviously, the smokers feel differently," he remarked dryly.

Arizona pastors extinguish smoking in parish halls

By Joy E. Trichte
 Catholic News Service

PHOENIX — Two Phoenix pastors have joined in the no-smoking cause by banning smoking in their parish halls.

The pastors, from Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral and St. Helen Parish, say the ban takes a stand against smoking that has been neglected by the church.

"We should have been or should be in the forefront of this movement to promote good health practices — not dragging our feet," said Father Robert Voss, pastor of St. Helen's.

"Really we should be doing

more to encourage our own parishioners to kick the habit," he added. "I would personally rather lose the income that I would gain renting the hall than I would allow things that would injure people's health," he told *The Catholic Sun*, Phoenix's diocesan newspaper.

Father Michael O'Grady, rector of the cathedral parish, said, "It seems like every place you go where people meet there is a (no smoking) sign up. When I go to the hospital people are smoking outside. When you go to a ball game people are smoking outside. So, I thought it was time for us. We're way behind."

For many parishes, renting

the halls brings in necessary income that some fear could be diminished by a no-smoking policy.

Father Voss said most parishes are reluctant to ban smoking because they are afraid they will lose business. But St. Helen's did not lose money from hall rentals after the ban, and even found a new niche in the market.

"People can play bingo anywhere now. The Catholic Church no longer has a monopoly on that, but they can't find smoke-free bingo everywhere because most bingo halls are permeated with smoke. So in a sense, we are

offering something they can't get everywhere," he said.

Father O'Grady likewise noted an increase in attendance in bingo at Ss. Simon and Jude after the smoking ban. "The first night we doubled the numbers of the previous week," he said.

Father O'Grady declared the hall a non-smoking facility in mid-July after it was renovated. St. Helen's parish hall was restored in December of last year and deemed a non-smoking structure in January. Both pastors said they have received positive feedback with the exception of a few dissatisfied parishioners.