

New bus schedule irks Catholic school parents

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

PITTSFORD — Some St. Louis School parents are protesting the Pittsford School District's new afternoon busing schedule in which high-school students are riding the same buses as young children attending the Catholic school.

The St. Louis parents will attend a meeting of the town school board slated for Monday, Sept. 18, at 7:30 p.m. in Mendon Center Elementary School, Mendon Center Road.

St. Louis School houses students in pre-kindergarten through grade six, according to Audrey Janicki, the mother of two children attending the Catholic school in Pittsford.

"I think my children are too young to be thrown into that older environment," said Janicki, who has a daughter in fourth grade, and a son in second.

Janicki added that some parents were planning to sign a petition protesting the new schedule, Janicki said. A letter circulated to St. Louis parents with the petition listed several complaints about the new arrangement.

"We have always had direct bus transportation as taxpayers who use very little other school services, it is the least we can expect," the letter stated.

In addition to their concerns about mixing older and younger students on the same buses, parents fear their small children will not be adequately supervised when they are transferred from one bus to another, she said.

Janicki added that many of the young children are coming home later than they did in the past — a problem that may worsen when winter comes and snow causes traffic delays, she continued.

Pittsford school officials acknowledged the parents' concerns, but said they were urging them to adopt a "wait-and-see" attitude toward the new schedule before condemning it.

"We're asking them to stick with it, to try it," said William Harvey, the district's transportation director.

According to Harvey, up until this year school buses provided by the Town of Pittsford School District have taken the elementary school children directly from St. Louis to their various drop-off points

on the route home. This year, however, 130 students from St. Louis are being bused to Pittsford Sutherland High School after being picked up at the Catholic school at 3:05 p.m.

At Sutherland, high-school students from four non-public high schools — Our Lady of Mercy, McQuaid Jesuit High School, Allendale Columbia and The Harley School — board various buses carrying St. Louis children.

Meanwhile, 30 St. Louis students will transfer to two buses at Sutherland.

Sutherland became the district's new bus route transfer point after Allendale Columbia told the district that it could no longer use the school's parking lot as a transfer point, Harvey said.

To make more efficient use of the district buses, the transportation office decided to include St. Louis students in the busing transfer at Sutherland, Harvey continued, pointing out that Sutherland is near St. Louis.

Up until this fall, St. Louis buses were operating at only one-third of capacity since they were used exclusively for students of the Catholic school, Harvey explained. He noted that the new schedule enables the district to decrease from 14 to 10 the number of buses it previously used for the 360 private-school students who use the district's bus service.

"The more kids we can roll into a transfer, the more efficient the buses are," Harvey stated.

Harvey emphasized that the district will save money in fuel consumption as well as wear and tear on school buses.

John O'Rourke, the Pittsford School District's superintendent, said he doesn't foresee any problems having high-school students ride with elementary-school children.

"They are young ladies and gentlemen," O'Rourke said of the high school students. "They are not to be feared."

As for parents' concerns that St. Louis students might get lost in the shuffle at the Sutherland transfer site, Harvey noted that his staff is training bus drivers to supervise the youngsters when they get off and on buses.

Harvey concluded that if the new schedule does not work for parents and students, the district is willing to revert to the old bus schedule.

Everything's coming up cabbage

Mark Leverenz tosses a head of cabbage during a cabbage bocce tournament at the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Cabbage Patch Festival in Hamlin. The fourth annual festival, held on church grounds Sept. 8-9, also featured cabbage bingo, cabbage recipe contest, a cabbage hat contest, and various games. The festival closed with a concert by 'Nik and the Nice Guys' Saturday evening.



S. John Wilkin/Staff Photographer

Mother Angelica to speak at Sept. 29 conference

ROCHESTER — Mother Angelica, founder of the Eternal World Television Network, will be the featured speaker when the Western New York Chapter of Catholics United for the Faith sponsors its annual conference at the end of this month.

Mother Angelica will begin the conference with a talk to young people from 2:15 to 3:15 p.m. at the Party House, 677 Beahan Road, on Friday, Sept. 29. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$6 for students.

In addition to Father Mitch Pacwa, SJ, a noted author and biblical scholar, and Father Robert J. Levis, professor of theology at Gannon University, Mother Angelica will also speak at a dinner slated to begin at 6 p.m. at the Party House.

Fathers Pacwa and Levis will also address conference participants on Saturday, Sept. 30, when the program moves

to Holy Spirit Church, 1355 Hatch Road in Webster. The conference will begin that day with a 9 a.m. Mass followed by talks and Benediction.

Tickets are \$30 per person for dinner Friday night and the conference on Saturday. They may be obtained by calling Mike Macaluso at 716/436-9006 (days) or 248-9094 (evenings), or Mike Gallagher at 425-4333 (days).

Since being founded in 1981, EWTN has grown into one of the world's largest religious broadcasting networks, reaching almost 40 million cable subscribers in 49 U.S. states and 16 countries.

The 24-hour cable network features

documentaries, weekly series, seasonal musical specials, devotionals and live coverage of church events. EWTN is planning extensive coverage of Pope John Paul II's upcoming U.S. visit slated for Oct. 4-8.

In addition to being noted for her work on EWTN, Mother Angelica founded Our Lady of the Angels Monastery order in Birmingham, Ala. The author of more than 50 books on spirituality, she has garnered several awards and honorary degrees.

Also an author and lecturer, Father Pacwa is an expert on the New Age Movement, the occult, and Oriental religions.

Father Levis has produced the software program *Catalog of Faith for Middle Schoolers*, to reach children in the computer age. Copies of the program will be available at the conference.



Corpus Christi dinner slated to help parish's six outreach ministries

ROCHESTER — Corpus Christi Church will hold its 14th annual Heart of the City Gala, titled "A Hollywood Party," to benefit its six outreach ministries on Saturday, Sept. 23, at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center, 123 E. Main St.

The evening begins at 6 p.m. with a cash bar reception, followed by 7 p.m. dinner and dancing. At 9:30 p.m., the Corpus Christi Players will pay a musical tribute to the silver screen, and the evening will conclude with dancing to the music of Master Brass.

Tickets are \$60 each. For information or reservations, call 716/325/2424 or 262-3576.

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