

# DIOCESAN NEWS



John Wilkin/Staff photographer  
 Patricia Rice (left), and her daughter, Susan Reichert, enjoy their first visit to Bingo World, located in the Dewey-Latta Plaza in Greece. Rice and Reichert, both longtime players at Our Lady of Mercy Parish, said they saw many familiar faces at Bingo World last Tuesday evening, Oct. 17.

## Parishes unite to save bingo games

By Mike Latona  
 Staff writer

There are slightly fewer "Bingo" signs adorning the grounds of parishes in northwest Monroe County these days.

Yet this doesn't signify a decrease in bingo games. If anything, these parishes hope to increase their revenue by pooling their efforts and sharing new sites.

Just as importantly, these alternate locales help ensure the continuation of bingo operations being threatened by new anti-smoking laws.

A unique effort has commenced in Greece, where the former Homestyle Family Buffet in the Dewey-Latta Plaza is now a bingo facility being used exclusively by Catholic parishes. Meanwhile, two Gates parishes have moved their bingo games to a hall being operated by the Patriots Drum and Bugle Corps.

Bingo World in Greece, which opened Oct. 7, is the new home for five parish bingo operations: St. John the Evangelist (Greece); St. Charles Borromeo; Our Lady of Mercy; Our Mother of Sorrows; and Holy Rosary.

The parlor is operated by St. John the Evangelist Parish and is leased from the building's owner, Wilmorite, Inc.

According to Bingo World manager Bob DeMaria, participating parishes either pay a rental fee to St. John the Evangelist or allow St. John's to run their

"bell jar" games. Parishes are also responsible for providing their own volunteer workers on the days they use the facility.

The need for a new bingo hall arose after a state law was passed in 1994 prohibiting smoking on any church property which also has a school in operation.

DeMaria, a St. John the Evangelist parishioner, said efforts to secure a new facility intensified after the parish received a notice from the Monroe County Department of Health in mid-1995 saying it soon planned to begin enforcing this law.

Because other parishes have faced the same dilemma, DeMaria explained, it didn't take long for nearby churches to unite with St. John's.

"I wish I could figure out how to have eight days in a week," DeMaria quipped. DeMaria said early response to Bingo World has been positive and attendance has been similar to what member parishes had been drawing at their churches.

Anne Recino, a bingo volunteer from Our Lady of Mercy, predicts that Tuesday-night attendance will rise.

"I think it's better than at the church anyway," she commented. "It's roomier, and the children don't have to smell all that smoke."

Father Joseph F. D'Aurizio, pastor of St. John the Evangelist, is pleased about the many potential benefits these parishes can derive from the new arrangement.

"They have an opportunity to continue their bingo operation and perhaps enhance it, and they still comply with the law," Father D'Aurizio said.

Those same reasons have led two Gates parishes, St. Helen's and St. Theodore's, to alter their bingo operations as well.

Both parishes recently moved to the new Patriots Hall, which opened in late August in Westmar Plaza. St. Helen's and St. Theodore's are the only Catholic organizations currently using the facility.

Sister Nancy DeRycke, SSJ, pastoral administrator of St. Helen's, said Tuesday-evening participation has already shown a slight increase.

"We were afraid we'd lose people who could just walk over to St. Helen's before," Sister DeRycke said. "But (other parishioners) have been gracious about picking them up."

## Activists told: Create course

By Rob Cullivan  
 Staff writer

Rochester City Court Judge Frank P. Geraci, Jr., has sentenced three men associated with the Catholic Worker Movement to 100 hours of community service each and ordered them to pay \$500 fines for fingerprinting the walls of the Monroe County Department of Social Services last July.

Eric LeCompte, Paul Tremblay and Harry Murray, a professor of sociology at Nazareth College of Rochester, were sentenced Oct. 16, after pleading guilty to fourth-degree criminal mischief, a misdemeanor, last August.

The trio had originally been charged with second-degree criminal mischief, a felony, for their actions. They were protesting the county's policy of fingerprint imaging of welfare recipients, which its supporters have said is designed to prevent welfare fraud. The policy has drawn protest from a number of activists who see it as stigmatizing welfare clients.

LeCompte is a former resident staff person of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, a Catholic Worker House at 402 South Ave. Murray and Tremblay are both former residents.

Murray said the judge told the men to spend their community service time creating an anti-violence curriculum for schools. Murray added that they have nine months to complete the curriculum.

"I think (Geraci's) rationale was, since we were practicing nonviolent civil disobedience, that that would be a good use of our skills," Murray said.

The three men entered the social services office on July 10 following a prayer service sponsored by St. Joseph's outside the government building at 111 Westfall Road. They then coated their fingers with ink from pads and wrote such slogans as, "Fingerprinting is wrong," in the building's waiting room and cafeteria.

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## You Don't Have to Write a Letter to Santa.

If you are unemployed, on assistance, or just going through a tough time financially, you may be eligible to receive food and toys to make the holiday a happy one. Call the Salvation Army at 987-9592 before November 10 for information on how to register.



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