

Parenting

Horseheads film event offers full family involvement

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

HORSEHEADS — It would be stating the obvious to list a Catholic church as a good gathering place for families.

However, as Terry Spaulding pointed out, family-oriented parish events are not always as plentiful as one might think.

"Parishes will have outreaches for different kinds of groups, but there aren't too many things that include the whole family," Spaulding remarked. "They're adult or youth oriented."

To enhance an air of inclusiveness, Spaulding and her husband, Steve, are launching a "Family Film Forum" at the Church of St. Mary Our Mother. The inaugural event will take place Saturday, March 23, immediately following the 5 p.m. Mass in St. Mary Our Mother School, 809 Westlake St.

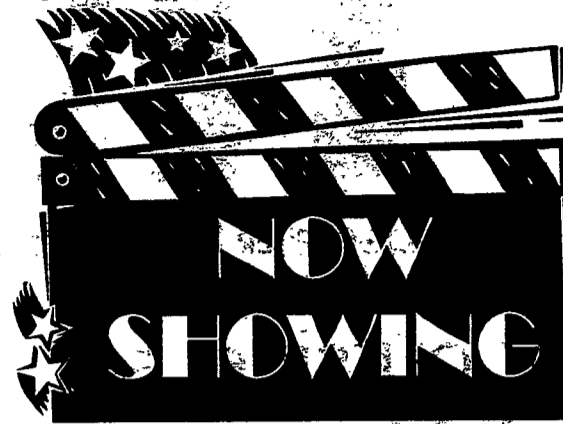
Included in the festivities will

be a screening of "Angels in the Outfield." Steve Spaulding explained that the movie "is not a religious film, but it gives a slight hint that there's a God. And, it's a movie that parents and children both like."

He stressed that wholesome content will be the focus of all future Family Film Forums. He plans, for example, to include biographical films on famous religious figures, such as "A Man for All Seasons," which depicted the life of St. Thomas More.

Additional family film nights have been planned at St. Mary Our Mother School for May 18, July 20, Sept. 21 and Nov. 16. Steve Spaulding said the event may become monthly if interest is strong enough.

An informal and relaxed atmosphere will be encouraged. Rather than sit in folding chairs, families will spread out on the



auditorium floor atop comforters and pillows. To avoid an admission charge, families will provide their own meals and refreshments. In addition, children can bring their own games in case the movie selections are not to their liking.

Terry Spaulding noted that the forum will enable adults to enjoy a Saturday evening at the movies under an arrangement "where the kids aren't staying

home with the baby-sitter."

"We already have too much of that," she commented.

Father Thomas W. Burr, pastor of St. Mary Our Mother, is enthused about the benefits of this new parish activity.

"The idea is to make it a social event for families, and to provide good, clean entertainment for the kids," he remarked.

Father Burr also regards the forum as a helpful influence in parents' daily television and movie selections.

"This is sort of to spur parents to take a little more interest in what their children do view — to encourage parents to take the handle," the pastor said.

The idea for a film night was raised by families who attend a popular coffee hour after each 9 a.m. Sunday Mass at St. Mary Our Mother.

"The coffee hour has been a great way for parishioners to meet each other and build church community," said Steve Spaulding, a parish council member who helps organize the coffee hour.

He hopes that this continual bonding will lead families toward even further parish involvement.

"We also want to do Christian service. And if our own kids see that we're doing good works, then they'll want to get involved," he said.

EDITORS' NOTE: The Family Film Forum is open to any interested families, regardless of parish affiliation or religious denomination. For details on future events, call Steve and Terry Spaulding at 607/739-9282.

Priest publishes original tale with familiar Easter cast

By Michael Cox
Catholic News Service

WORCESTER, Mass. — Father Richard Lewandowski said he had hoped his first published work would be a deep and meaningful theological treatise.

But it turned out to be a story for children called *The Easter Bunny*. And that's just fine with

the parish priest.

The Easter Bunny is a story aimed at a youthful audience that deals with the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus — as seen through the eyes of a bunny.

"Even a simple book can have a message," said Father Lewandowski, pastor of St. Camillus de Lellis Parish in

Fitchburg.

"When Jesus touches anyone, even someone as little as a bunny, that person's life is changed, and with that change comes a call to share a new life with others."

In the story, a bunny becomes the first creature to see Jesus after his resurrection and is bestowed the honor of bring-

ing candy to children on Easter Sunday.

"I think it is an excellent way to teach a deep and spiritual mystery to little children," Father Lewandowski told the *Catholic Free Press*, Worcester's diocesan paper.

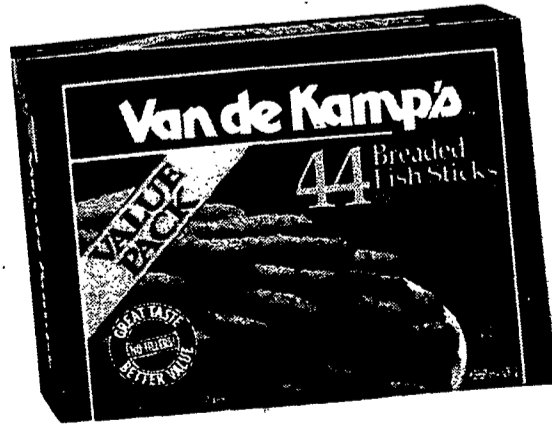
"I don't ever recall anyone making a connection between the two most recognizable fig-

ures of Easter — Jesus and the Easter Bunny," he added.

Father Lewandowski said he was "excited by the enthusiasm" that has come from the book, and hopes it will continue.

EDITORS' NOTE: *The Easter Bunny* retails for \$4.95. It is available from Brent Anderson Publishers, 25 Darnell Rd., Worcester, MA 01606.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR DINNER THIS FRIDAY?



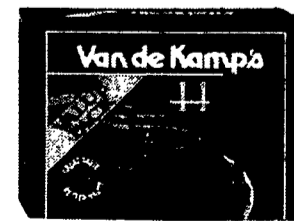
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