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Opening day drawing near for Rossville Christian school

ROSSVILLE—The first day of school is two weeks away and Bob Marsh is ready.

Marsh is administrator of New Bethel Academy, a Christian school for pre-school, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade students which will open its doors Aug. 19.

The school is starting with only a few grades but plans include adding one grade each year through high school and perhaps eventually, a bible college, Marsh said.

The academy's purpose is to glorify God in proper education of children, and will offer a combination of academics, discipline and Christian teaching, Marsh said.

New Bethel Academy is currently designed to educate 30 students in the grades offered. To date, seven students have been enrolled, two from the New Bethel congregation and the remainder from outside Rossville.

It's a slow start, but Marsh is used to slow starts. New Bethel Academy is the fifth Christian school he has started or added classes to. Others are in Barstow, Calif., Louisiana, Crystal Lake and most recently, Judah Christian School in Champaign where he added a preschool.

Marsh's previous schools all started small the first year but grew significantly in following years, he said. The Louisiana school started with five students in 1981 and had grown to nearly 400 students by 1987.

Marsh has also worked in public schools, including Westville and at VOTEC in Danville where he taught building trades.

Marsh is usually in his office by 7a.m., where he



MARSH

remains until 5:30 each day, preparing for the first day of school, including helping implement a curriculum and hiring educators.

Two teachers have been hired for the academy. Rene Barragree, a Rossville resident, and Crystal Witherow will teach students.

Barragree is a graduate of Ozark Christian College in Joplin, Mo., and Witherow graduated from Center Conservation of Ministering Acts and Bible College in Florissant, Mo.

The young women will be paid from tuition parents pay the school, a rather iffy proposition at the moment. "They were willing to come without knowing for sure what

they're getting," Marsh said.

New Bethel Academy could apply for tax money but will not. "If you take their money, then they can tell you what to do," Marsh said. "We don't want that."

Instead, parents will pick up the tab. Tuition for three- and four-year-olds for half days is \$1,200. Tuition for full-day kindergarten and first grade is \$1,600. Those who wish to make one payment will save \$100 on the total cost and financing arrangements are available through the First National Bank of Rossville, Marsh said. All-day preschool costs are \$75.55 per week for three-year-olds and \$75 weekly for four-year-olds.

Although participation is currently small, the academy will not take any child whose parents want him to attend. An admissions application must be completed, followed by an interview between Marsh, the parents and potential student. Following the interview, parents

See SCHOOL on other side

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Police News



Steven D. Lafferty, 39, of 301 S. Second St., Fisher, was ticketed for disobeying a traffic control device following an accident at 11:50 a.m. Sunday.

Police said Lafferty, in a 1994 Ford, entered the intersection of Thompson and Rt. 1 and hit a 1994 Chevrolet driven by Alan K. Morgan of 106 Donovan, Wellington.

A passenger in Morgan's vehicle was taken to Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital.

A **boy's** green 20" Dyno bicycle was taken Sunday from the 500 block of East Thompson.

A **36-year-old** man reported Monday that someone took a maroon Next bicycle from a back yard in the 400 block of North Seventh Ave.

No tickets or injuries were reported in an accident at 9:45 a.m. Monday in the Henning's parking lot.

Police said Russell D. Allen of 725 Trego Dr.,

backed his 2002 Ford truck into a parked 1999 Buick owned by Harry J. Ludwig of 714 Wilson.

Police are investigating a hit-and-run accident reported at 11:08 a.m. Monday at 517 S. Market. An unknown vehicle hit a parked 2002 Dodge Caravan owned by William King, 703 W. Maple.

Fire call

The Hoopeston Fire Department was called at 4:50 a.m. Monday to a bathroom fire at 703 W. Washington. No injuries were reported.

New Books at the Library



Fiction:

Mount Vernon Love Story by Mary Higgins Clark
Deadly Embrace by Jackie Collins
Fire Ice by Clive Cussler
Chopping Spree by Diane Mott Davidson (mystery)

School continued from other side

will be notified in writing of the school's decision.

Those students who are accepted will receive a quality education. Four-year-old kindergarten students will be taught phonics and will learn to read sentences and stories with one- and two-vowel words; will learn cursive writing, including writing their first names, and will read poetry. Mathematically, students will learn to recognize numbers and count to 100, will learn basic addition, number concepts 1-20 and will learn the concept of larger and smaller. Students will memorize poems, finger plays and bible verses, too, Marsh said.

Each student will be taught manners, such as saying "please" and "thank you" and will call adults "sir" or "ma'am." A dress code is in place for students and teachers. Both teachers are expected to wear dresses or skirts. "I'm hoping next year there will be (uniforms) but this year, there's not," Marsh said.

The school has three rules: don't talk without permission, don't be out of your seat without permission and be kind to others. Students who break the rules will receive demerits, including time-outs, as discipline.

Students will also learn gender identities. "I want (teachers) to teach the little girls to be little girls," Marsh said. While the statement may rankle modern women,

Marsh said gender-based differences exist and are part of God's plan. "In God's economy, mother is the love and dad is the government," he said.

The school is the second step in the long-range plan of the Rev. Jim Lloyd, pastor of New Bethel Fellowship. Other plans include adding a nursing home, drug rehabilitation center and ministerial retirement home, he said.

But first, the school must get off the ground. At 75, Marsh is at an age where many people are thinking of retiring, if not already retired. But the superintendent has no plans of letting up. "Actually, I wanted to retire but that hasn't worked out," he said.

"It's a love and a calling," he said. "I love kids. If I have any gift that the Lord has given me, it's a love of kids. I want them to learn to love and to accept love, a Godly love," he said.

Weather



Mostly sunny today. High 80. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 58. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 82, low 58.

For current weather conditions, call the **Hoopeston Weather Line** at (217) 283-6221.

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