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Welcome back, Students!

Special Back To School edition, Thursday, August 18, 1983

ISSUE TWO

BACK TO SCHOOL

Eagle Lake Headlight

Garwood, Sheridan, St. Anthony's and St. Mary's schools featured

Nada-Eagle Lake bus scheduled

St. Mary's Catholic School in Nada will open the year next week with several differences — including the addition of bus transportation for students attending from Eagle Lake.

According to principal Jesse Morales, who is starting his second year, the school also is adding some computer courses, has hired two new teachers causing some assignment changes, and has scheduled the grading periods for nine weeks each, instead of six.

The Nada school expects between 75 and 80 students this year, a slight increase over 1982-83. There is room for as many as 100 students, depending on grade levels. Morales said Monday that if students haven't registered, they should do so immediately by calling the school.

The new bus transportation from Eagle Lake has been arranged by the parishioners of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who just this month purchased the vehicle, and will be responsible for its operation and scheduling. Morales said the parishes in Nada, Eagle Lake and Columbus have met on the transportation issue, and arranged for the bus here. There has been discussion on Our Lady of Perpetual Help purchasing a bus to operate between Eagle Lake and St. Anthony's in Columbus, but that has not yet been decided.

About 25 Eagle Lake students attend the school south of Garwood and must make their own arrangements for the Guadelupe bus by calling the Church. "Once the bus starts rolling and people realize it's there," Morales said, it might help increase the Catholic school's enrollment. Almost all students live in the Rice Consolidated school district, with the few exceptions from the El Campo district just south of Nada.

One of the new teachers is Sister Linda, an Arkansas native who has been teaching for more than 25 years. She reported to St. Mary's in early August, and will take over the first and second grades from Bea Schoellmann who will teach third and fourth grade, and Language Arts. She is taking the place of Elizabeth Reed who is returning to college for additional studies.

Principal Morales will be teaching the math and science courses, and be the home-room teacher for the seventh and eighth graders.

Samuel Piccione is the other new full time teacher, who will take over the social studies classes as well as be the home room teacher for 5th and 6th grades. Also new is Mrs. Donna Merta, who will be teaching girls physical education and 3rd and 4th grade math. Mrs. Bernice Popp returns as the part-time music teacher for choir and music.

Others on the staff are Mrs. Helen Burger, the aide in the first and second grades; Elizabeth Schoellmann, librarian; and Dr. Robert Cody of Wharton who works at the school twice a week teaching band to the fifth through eighth graders.

The computers have taken a place in the library where Morales has installed two Radio Shack Model Fours that can load programs saved on regular cassette recording tapes. That placement caused a shuffle, in order to make room. Last year, Morales took 14 boxes of books — copies of textbooks sent to the school free by book publishers for the school's inspection — to the University of Houston in Victoria. This year, more such books are being removed to make room.

The computers will be used in grades five through eight "to get students acquainted with computers, so they won't be afraid of them," Morales said. He will teach some basic programming, but also has some computer-assisted instruction programs, such as history and geography. He also has a program to help teach typing, that takes one line at a time and asks the student to repeat certain characters.

As for the grading periods, Morales said the change from six-week to nine-week periods should be better for students and teachers. The time will be longer so that students who have a bad month or a bad score on a test will have more time to bring up their grades. Teachers won't be so burdened with paper work either. "Six weeks go by a lot faster than you think," the principal said.

Morales, who added the band program last year, said he would like to see the school offer a few more subjects the kids could enjoy...to add motivation and interest in school. He also is looking to help the students to become more well-rounded too.

The school is accredited and follows Texas Education Association guidelines, as well as federal guidelines for special education and the reduced-price and free lunch program.

"If someone attends here then goes to the public school, the experience counts and the courses are transferable," Morales emphasized, so there is no lost time in making up classes.

There is a one-time $12 per student registration fee to attend St. Mary's, then there is a monthly tuition. For parishioners, the cost is $15 for one child or $20 per family; non-parishioners pay $30 per child or $40 per family. For the students who ride the bus from St. Mary's, there is a $7.50 per month charge.

The school's board of education includes John Popp, president; Clem Korenek, vice president; Ruby Hoffman, secretary; Cecilia Krenek, treasurer, and Leonard Staff.

St. Mary's School supply list on Page 5

Above, librarian Elizabeth Schoellmann spent some warm days this summer in the St. Mary's School library, reorganizing the books, to make room for two computers. **Below,** The School is at the left of the photo, while St. Mary's Church dominates the scene to the right.

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