

St. Joe's student dies of meningitis

by NICHOLAS J. PRIMERANO
Ken-Ton Editor

A student at St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute died last week of a meningitis infection, school officials are reporting.

The student, freshman Eric Pitman of Egbertsville, was 14 years old and was ill with the streptococcus pneumoniae bacteria.

The school is not releasing any other information, other than a prepared statement, as per a family request.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with our student and his family at this moment," the statement said. "He was a member of the St. Joe's community — our brother, our friend — and the concern now is helping our students and his family through this difficult time. We have been in contact with the Erie County Health Department and they have informed us that people who were in contact with the student do not need to be treated with antibiotics as a preventive measure. Infections with this type of bacteria are very common and rarely develop into meningitis. We simply ask for understanding and respect as we assist our students and the entire St. Joe's community through the grieving process."

Pitman was formerly a student at St. Gregory the Great School in Amherst, but Principal Patricia Freund neglected to return numerous phone calls from The Bee.

Erie County Health Commissioner Anthony J. Billitier released a letter to parents on Feb. 28 describing what meningitis is and how it can be contracted:

- Meningitis is a rare illness caused by many different bacteria and viruses.
- Streptococcus pneumoniae is the bacteria that caused the student's illness.
- People who have been in contact with someone diagnosed with meningitis caused by streptococcus pneumoniae do not need to be treated with antibiotics as a preventive measure.
- Many healthy people have the bacteria streptococcus pneumoniae living in their upper respiratory tracts, even though they are not ill.
- The bacteria, streptococcus pneumoniae can cause infections of the middle ear, sinus and blood, as well as pneumonia and rarely, meningitis.
- Infections with this bacteria are common, however, it is rare for those infected to develop meningitis.

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Harlem Road construction begins within weeks

by KEATON T. DEPRIEST
Cheektowaga Editor

By the end of March or early April, the Harlem Road reconstruction project will begin, encompassing 19 months of work to widen and revamp the area from the intersection with Genesee Street to the Wehrle Drive and Kensington Avenue crossings.

The contractor conducting the work, DiPizio Construction, located at 100 Stradtman St., Cheektowaga, is scheduled to complete the \$20.4 million, 2-mile long project by December 2008.

The reconstruction will give Harlem Road a complete redesign, adding new sidewalks, masonry walls, decorative lighting and roundabouts.

Susan Surdej, New York State Department of Transportation public information officer, said

DiPizio Construction plans to start working at the Genesee Street intersection with Harlem Road in early spring when the winter weather breaks.

"In year one, they are planning on finishing from just north of Genesee Street to south of Cleveland Drive. In year two, they are planning on doing north of Cleveland Drive to Saratoga, including the roundabout work," she said.

A double roundabout will be installed at the Kensington Avenue and Wehrle Drive intersection during the second year of construction, in 2008.

"It is likely the other roundabout (at Harlem's intersection with Cleveland Drive) will be started in year two as well, it just depends on the scheduling," Surdej said.

She said the contractor is planning to install 200 feet of water

line per day on Harlem Road during this year's construction season. A separate DiPizio crew will be installing storm sewers at the same time.

"I am anticipating he is going to make a lot of progress with that very quickly," Surdej said.

The first proposals for a reconstruction of Harlem Road date back to 1983, when suggestions were originally made for improvements to the street from the intersections of Maryvale Drive and Kensington Avenue.

In November, Thomas Messina, assistant regional design engineer, told The Bee that the Harlem Road plans were extended to Genesee Street in 1998, with the designs for the project being finalized within the last two years.

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Live Catholic radio show hits landmark

Calling All Catholics, the longest-running live Catholic radio program produced in Western New York celebrated its 500th show on March 2.

Calling All Catholics, which airs weekdays 5-6 p.m. on 101.7 FM, The Station of the Cross, is a live program where listeners call in and ask their faith-related questions to a Catholic priest.

The first episode of Calling All Catholics was broadcast on Jan. 31, 2005, and is broadcast from 6325 Sheridan Drive, Williamsville.

The Station of the Cross commemorated the milestone with many of Calling All Catholics' priest hosts and station listeners. A Holy Mass in the Station's Chapel of the Holy Innocents was led by Father Dan Young, the Station's spiritual advisor and pastor of St. Anthony's and St. Joseph's in Lockport.

The celebration culminated with a special edition of Calling All Catholics, in which multiple priest hosts were in studio to answer questions from callers.

Calling All Catholics is produced by Holy Family Communications, a not-for-profit Catholic radio apostolate.

Since its first show, more than

3,700 calls have been received. The show has had 19 Diocesan and Religious Ordered priests from Western New York serve as hosts.



OUTSTANDING YOUTH — Michael Couche of Williamsville was presented with the Outstanding Catholic Youth Award at the 55th annual Diocesan Youth Convention held in February. He is pictured with Bishop Edward U. Kmiec. Couche is a member of SS. Peter and Paul and the Youth Ministry Core Planning Team. He organized a clothing drive titled "Jeans for Jesus" and raised money for hospice through "Tunes for Charity"; his band "Lucky Charms" was one that participated in the battle of the bands. He is a senior at Williamsville South High School.

Environmental milestone reaps both kinds of 'green benefits'

UB saves \$4 million annually

More than a decade ago, when the term "climate change" had not yet made its way into the national lexicon, the University at Buffalo made a major investment in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through a \$17 million comprehensive energy-conservation project.

The project has benefited not only the planet but also the university's bottom line, saving UB nearly \$15 million since the program was launched. In January, UB made its final payment on the loan that partially funded the project.

Beginning in February, with the project's debt retired, annual savings from it will jump to nearly \$4 million, said Michael F. Dupre, associate vice president for university facilities.

Savings generated by the project have been even greater than originally projected because of the rising cost of energy over the years since its launch in 1997.

"It has freed up money for other institutional priorities, like hiring faculty," he said.

Dupre added that the serendipity in that the project's savings have surpassed its cost during the semester when the university is celebrating its environmental commitment under the theme "A Greener Shade of Blue."

"It is entirely fitting that we are reaching such an important environmental milestone this semester, when we are also fortunate to have some of the world's top environmentalists speaking on campus," Dupre said.

For details about "A Greener Shade of Blue," go to www.buffalo.edu/greener_ub/.

The project, which at the time was one of the largest ever undertaken on a U.S. college or university campus, was named "Energy Project of the Year" in 1997 by the Association of Energy Engineers.

It has reduced UB's total energy-related air pollution by 15 percent and cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 31,000 tons annually. That's a level of emissions equivalent to the amount that 6,000 cars generate every year, according to data generated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

UB Energy Officer Walter Simpson, who managed the project for the university, said that it "required no up-front money to be paid either by the university or New York State taxpayers."

About \$13 million of the \$17 million project was funded through the loan that was just paid back. UB also received a \$4.3 million incentive from its utility, Niagara Mohawk Power Corp., now National Grid.

The project, which covered the North Campus, was a partnership between UB, Niagara Mohawk, Honeywell (formerly CES/Way International) and the SUNY construction fund.

"In implementing such a sweeping energy-conservation program in the 1990s, UB and its facilities department put themselves well ahead of the curve for colleges and universities," said Bob Kennedy, east region vice president of Honeywell Building Solutions SES. "Because of the outstanding financial and environmental benefits the program delivered, UB is now able to dedicate more resources to academic excellence, its core mission."

Included among the broad array of conservation measures in the project were those that allowed for the reuse and recovery of waste heat; variable-speed controls for fan and pump motors; conversion of some electric space- and water-heating systems to natural gas; more efficient ventilation systems and brighter, more efficient lighting systems, both inside and outside UB buildings.

Encouraged by the success of the project, UB in 2005 embarked on its second major energy-conservation plan, focusing on the South Campus. The \$11 million project, implemented by Chevron Energy Solutions, also will be paid for by savings at the meter.

A third such project, focusing on the North Campus, is now in the preliminary planning stages by University Facilities.

The 1997 project not UB's first energy-conservation venture. By the early 1990s, UB had implemented more than 300 small and large energy-conservation projects beginning in the 1970s. All projects to date have resulted in more than \$100 million in energy-cost savings.

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