

# School bus driver has fond memories of her passengers

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Julie Teddy, transportation department supervisor for the school system, shares Pradette's esteem for Piltz.

"There may be drivers as caring as Nila, but I don't think there is anyone who is more so," she said. "She has a heart of gold."

**VOLUNTEERING** for the job no one else wanted, Piltz gets to the bus yard, at 10 Mile and Ithapel in Farmington, by 5:45 a.m. to make coffee for the 30 drivers who will show up each day. By 6:45, she is back on the bus to get her first passengers at Harrison High. She completes her morning run at Fairview Early Childhood Center at 8:35.

From 11:30 a.m. till she returns to the bus yard at 4:30 p.m., Piltz will have picked up a handicapped child at Eagle, taken a shuttle passenger from Farmington High to a North Farmington High class, picked up her aide, taken special education students home from Harrison and picked up the younger students.

"I drive a wheelchair-equipped bus," Piltz said. Total capacity for that bus is 32, compared to 72 in a regular school bus.

Before working in Farmington, Piltz had jobs with the Livonia and Southfield school systems. She worked for the Great Lakes Transit Authority in the 1960s.

**HAS SHE** ever wanted to quit?

"You bet," she said with a trademark grin. "The negative part of this job is when parents don't realize a bus driver has to keep order. When students use filthy language or spit in the aisle, I'm not going to take it."

She observes wryly that "when youngsters reach the fifth grade or so, their personalities change, the minute they leave their homes."

For all her outspokenness, Piltz is protective of her charges and especially looks forward to her last run of the day — picking up the kids from Eagle and Fairview.

"They're respectful, they're still innocent and they are appreciative," she said.

Piltz started driving for schools when she was raising her son and daughter alone in the 1960s. "It was one of the few well-paying jobs for someone who hadn't finished college and wanted to be home for her kids," she said.

**PILTZ ALSO** has been a regular driver for the Willoway Day Camp in Novi for about 19 years. "Nila is one of the most loyal, dedicated people you could meet," said Lorraine Fisher, Willoway owner.

Active in community outreach with her fellow school bus drivers, Piltz helped initiate their bowloathons for muscular dystrophy.

They also help out at drawings with proceeds benefiting eight senior citizens.



**Spring scenes**

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Lorraine Karbel (left) gets some help from Gale Johnson during a painting session at Wendy's Restaurant at 10 Mile and Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills March 6. The children were painting spring scenes on the windows. They are from a special education scout troop at William Grace Elementary School in Farmington Hills.

# Bill requires plain English from utilities

Utilities would be required to use "plain English" in public notices for rate increases under legislation introduced last week in the Michigan House, according to information from Rep. Jan Dolan's offices, R-Farmington Hills.

House Bill 5462 stipulates that such notices:

- Be in non-technical and easy-to-understand language
- Have a distinctive headline stating that a rate increase may occur
- Include a method for interested citizens to obtain complete information without charge.
- Provide a simple means for rate-payers to express their opinions.

The lengthy and complex notices currently used are very technical, making it difficult for rate-payers to understand the potential for rate increases. This diminishes citizen participation in the process. Streamlining this information into everyday English will make it easier for rate-payers to understand and respond.

The bill also would require all notices to mention the name of the utility and a headline with the words "Notice of Possible Rate Increase."

In addition, the notices would have to include an estimate of the effect on the average residential bill and other information such as names, addresses and telephone numbers of public agencies involved in rate decisions.

# Mercy elects leadership team

The Farmington Hills-based Sisters of Mercy — Province of Detroit elected a new leadership team.

At an Assembly of Elections, 144 members of the Province chose Gretchen Elliott as the provincial administrator; Carla Marie Knoblock as assistant provincial and Marian Schultz, Nancy Thompson and Elizabeth Mary Burns, as members of the administrative team.

The Sisters of Mercy of the Province of Detroit are engaged in social work, education and health care in 15 states, The District of Columbia and four foreign countries: Argentina, Australia, Chile and Ireland.

The Province of Detroit sponsors one of the largest Catholic health care systems in the world as well as Mercy College of Detroit and Mercy High School in Farmington Hills.

The new leadership team will begin its four-year term on July 1. One of their major responsibilities will be to guide the Province of Detroit in its incorporation in the new institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

This Institute has been approved by Rome and will incorporate 20 congregations of Mercy totaling 8,000 Sisters of Mercy.

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