

They Help Women Who Had Abortions

By Joan Smith

There were 158,698 abortions in New York State in 1981 according to a State Center for Health report. This number is from one year, from one state, since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973.

What happens to the women who make these statistics? How do they cope and where do they go for support?

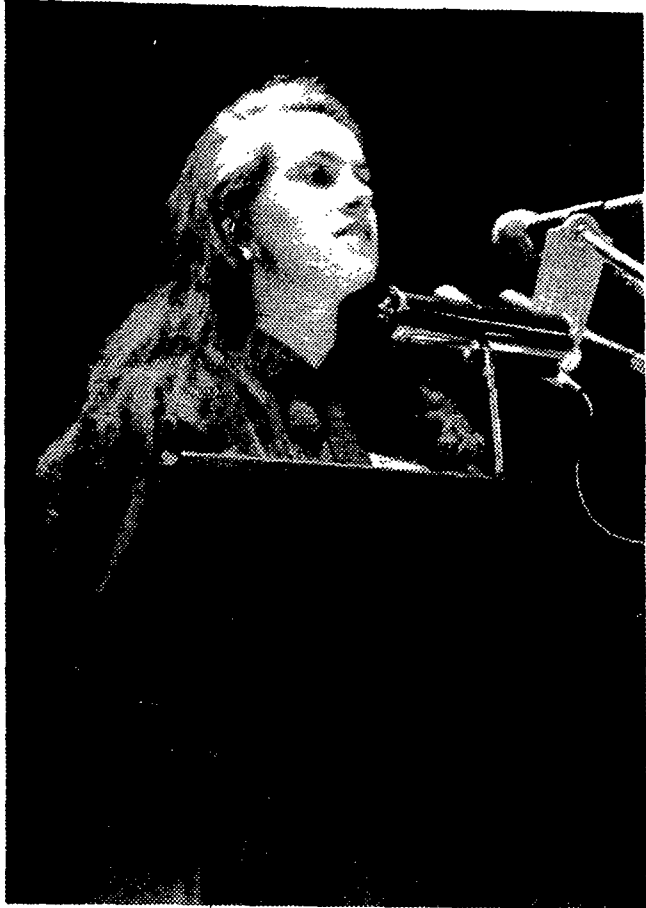
There are the Right to Life organizations, and here in Rochester the Puzzle Project has been helping women sort out their physical and emotional problems.

Now a new organization, Women Exploited by Abortion (WEBA) founded by rock musician Nancyjo Mann in 1982, has chapters in 35 states including New York. There are plans for beginning a chapter here in Rochester with Suzanne Lock and Georgia Higgins coordinating the efforts.

According to the WEBA premise, it is a pro-life, pro-healing group that places strong emphasis on educating women on the trauma of abortion; providing a forum for abortant women to share their experience, and dedicated to advocating pro-life philosophies and legislation.

"We're strong for a human life amendment," said Olivia Gans, director of the New Jersey Chapter of WEBA. "We want the father to have the right to know, and the parents to have the right to be notified when abortion is being considered."

Ms. Gans spoke at the National Right to Life Convention in Rochester on Saturday, Oct. 22. In a pre-conference interview she told the Courier-Journal that women are being exploited by abortion through the pressure by parents, boyfriends, husbands, and doctors who lead them to think abortion is the only solu-



Olivia Gans addressing the convention audience.

tion, and through the money making factor.

"Abortion is a multi-million dollar business," she said and referred to a California abortionist's \$900,000 income.

Ms. Gans, a gregarious, enthusiastic personality, had an abortion three years ago. Three months after the abortion her boyfriend left her, a common happening in abortion situations, she explained. She went through several months of intense depression. She recalled a personality change. She went from a person with "a laugh that could be heard down the hall" to a whining, withdrawn person.

"I came from a family of survivors," she said. She realized she had to do something if she wanted to survive. She began to communicate with her

family, began to pray and then sought counseling.

Then in 1982 she met Nancyjo Mann at the 1982 National Right to Life Convention where thrashing through their experiences they decided something had to be done to help women who were in the same position.

Ms. Gans is optimistic about the work of WEBA. When asked the one thing she would like to see the organization accomplish, she answered "to see the right of informed consent law set up."

According to Ms. Gans this would make it obligatory, under law, for women considering abortion to be shown the Life Magazine photo series on fetal development and a list of post-abortion physical and psychological traumas they may suffer.

Photos by Joan M. Smith



Father William Smith, and Mary Wright congratulate Mrs. Jeanne Sweeney, convention coordinator, on receiving the NYS Right to Life Volunteer Award.

1981 State Abortion Statistics

According to a New York State Center for Health Statistics record there were 158,698 induced abortions in New York State in 1981 (56,818 of them in upstate New York) in 1981, a 5.1 percent increase over 1980. Women under the age of 25 accounted for 59 percent of the induced abortions. Two-thirds were white and over 75 percent were unmarried. Seventy-seven percent had at least 12 years of education and 30 percent had studied on the post-

secondary level. More than half of the women had no living children and 44 percent had at least one previous abortion. Sixty-five percent of the recorded abortions occurred in nonhospital facilities and 88 percent took place during the first trimester.

Almost one quarter of all abortions recorded in New York State in 1981 were obtained by teenagers, while fewer than two percent were to women 40 years and older.



Political Support

Illinois Congressman Henry J. Hyde (R-C) told his listeners that the issue between the quality of life ethic and the sanctity of life ethic was a "titanic struggle." The three essentials of the sanctity of life, he explained, was knowing that each individual was created by God, is accountable to God, and is entitled to redemption by God's love.



Life Line

Father Gerald Delaney, pastor of St. Christopher parish in Sunnymead, Calif., joins a pro-life picket line outside the office of Dr. Oscar P. Tan, obstetrics and gynecology specialist who St. Christopher parishioners say does abortions in his Riverside, office which also is being picketed. (NC Photo)