



Laboring for life

March for Life organizers believe that public opinion about abortion will eventually be changed through continual efforts to keep the issue in the public eye. See page 3.



Super from the stripe

Cardinal Mooney converted 17 of 24 foul shots in a Private-Parochial League win over Mercy last week, giving the Lady Cards an edge in the race for the league title. See page 8.

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Geneva residents oppose five low-income houses

By Lee Strong

Construction of five low-income, rental houses in Geneva has met opposition from local residents and the newly elected city administration.

Approximately 40 people showed up at a City Council meeting, Wednesday, Jan. 6, threatening to sue the city if officials did not put a stop to construction of the houses, which are being built by the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministries (FLOSM). According to City Attorney Frederick Warder, however, the city has no legal means of halting construction of four of the houses — two on Garden Street, one on West Street and one on High Street.

Work on the fifth house, being erected on an oversized lot on William Street, has been halted pending consideration of a zoning variance. The city had granted a building permit for the house last fall.

According to Geneva Mayor Jack Starr, neighborhood residents' major objection to the two-story homes is to their appearance.

"They stick out like a sore thumb in a neighborhood of ranches," Starr said. "I called them pillboxes because (they look like) what we used to use for target practice in the service."

The mayor said the homes had originally been designed as town houses and were intended to be attached to each other, not constructed as free-standing units on separate lots. Each house is being built with two windowless sides, he noted, and one of the partially built houses is causing flooding of neighboring houses because its basement "is out of the ground too far."

Starr also said that neighbors are concerned that FLOSM will not use the houses as low-income rental units as planned, but instead will use them as half-way houses — for people on drugs or alcohol — or for battered wives.

Mayor Starr acknowledged that low-income homes are needed, but that the city — and neighborhood people — would like to see changes made in the design. "Any change would be 100 percent better than what we have (now)," he stated.

FLOSM's director, Giovina Caroscio, expressed surprise at continuing objections to the project and at the protest at the city council meeting. According to Caroscio, the city had approved the design before construction of the houses began last fall. Officials had asked some questions about the design when the plans were originally submitted, she acknowledged, but after discussion, building permits were granted. "We did everything le-

gally," Caroscio noted.

In addition, "We sent letters to the immediate neighbors before construction began, explaining what we were going to do and giving them the number to call if they had any questions," she said.

A number of people did call — some of them mentioning rumors about how the homes would be used — and she responded to them. Caroscio explained that the lots on which the houses are being built are zoned single-family-residential. Thus, the houses could not be used for group homes or half-way houses unless FLOSM obtained a zoning variance — for which Caroscio said the agency has no intention of applying.

"I've answered (questions about how the houses will be used) verbally, in writing; it's on the record in city hall and it's on record in the *Finger Lakes Times*," Caroscio added.

Caroscio also disagreed with the mayor's assessment of the homes and the neighborhoods in which they are being built. According to Caroscio, the neighborhoods consist of mixed housing, including ranches, two-story houses, an apartment complex and even commercial properties. Caroscio pointed out that the project is being financed through a \$289,000 grant from the New York State Homeless Housing and Assistance Program, and that one of the criteria the state investigated before granting approval was whether the houses would fit in with the neighborhoods.

Jaquetta Treece, project assistant for the State Department of Social Services, acknowledged that state inspectors — including herself — had visited the sites and had approved the design. "When we went to the sites, we saw a mix of two-story and ranch-style homes," Treece said. The inspectors concluded the new houses would not be out of character for the neighborhoods, she said.

In response to complaints about the FLOSM houses' appearance, Caroscio pointed out that the buildings are only partially constructed and that no landscaping has been done. Therefore, their appearance cannot be accurately judged at this point, she stated.

Caroscio acknowledged that the homes do have windowless sides, but this is because they were designed as highly energy-efficient homes, not because they were originally intended to be joined. John Kalberer of Pond Hill Homes in Blairsville, Pennsylvania — the company which designed the homes — corroborated this.

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Bonnie Traflet/Courier-Journal

DANCE OF PRAISE — The Shalom Dance Troupe, which is affiliated with St. Augustine's Church, gives a liturgical dance performance at St. Bridget's during a memorial service for Martin Luther King Jr. on Sunday evening, Jan. 17. The event was one of several local celebrations of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 18. For more on the King observance, see related story and photos on page 6.

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Because of mail delays associated with the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, we did not receive students' contributions in time to include an Echo page in this edition. Music and sports trivia questions, however, can be found on page 8.

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Cardinal says U.S. not 'resigned' to abortion

Washington (NC) — Despite suggestions to the contrary, the United States is not a "nation resigning itself to abortion," said Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago.

In a statement to mark the 15th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court's abortion decision, the cardinal said attempts to provide a principled defense of the court decision are "more unconvincing than ever." Cardinal Bernardin is chairman of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities.

The statement was released January 15 by the NCCB's Office for Pro-Life Activities in Washington. The high court's abortion ruling in *Roe vs. Wade* was issued January 22, 1973.

As proof that many Americans continue to oppose abortion Cardinal Bernardin cited:

- Opinion polls indicating that opposition to abortion is as strong now as it was in 1973. The cardinal said a recent CBS News-New York Times poll showed a majority of registered voters in both major parties favored a legal ban on abortion except in "rare special circumstances."
- A study by Planned Parenthood's

research affiliate showing that only a third of gynecologists perform abortions and that "enthusiasm for abortion" is lacking among both medical residents and attending physicians. As a result, he said, the percentage of abortions performed in clinics, rather than hospitals, is on the rise.

• An increase in the number of post-abortion counseling and reconciliation programs and mutual support groups for women who have had abortions.

The cardinal said it is now argued that Supreme Court decisions must be accepted regardless of their validity "simply because they have been in place long enough to become a basis for later legal developments."

He said that although abortion on demand is increasingly viewed as indefensible in principle, some people still defend it as "a tragic necessity to which we must resign ourselves."

"Those of us who support legal protection for the unborn are dismissed as idealists who ignore the lived experience of flesh-and-blood people in our pursuit of principle," said Cardinal Bernardin.

"Clearly one can be accused of worse things than idealism in the cause of justice," he said. Even if abortion were more entrenched in U.S. society than it is, the cardinal added, it would be necessary and appropriate to begin to build a consensus to protect the defenseless.

The cardinal said it was tragic that some infertile couples have "become so desperate as to resort to harmful practices such as surrogate motherhood to obtain a child."

He said that often these couples consider adoption first but are told that abortion on request has greatly reduced the number of newborns available.

"Study and reflection by legal scholars have helped confirm that the court's action was a misplaced legal interpretation which has opened the door to other problematic areas, rather than a legitimate application of constitutional principles," Cardinal Bernardin said.

Noting 1988 is an election year, he urged people to work together to "mobilize public opinion against abortion and for a legal system which will protect innocent unborn

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