

Retreat participants charged for trespass

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

GENEVA — Eleven people were arrested Friday, May 10, as part of an anti-nuclear protest at the Seneca Army Depot, Romulus.

Two of the protesters — Father James Callan, administrator of Corpus Christi Parish in Rochester, and Jan Bezila of Rochester — were charged with trespassing and were ordered to appear in federal court in Rochester.

Both activists were arrested during a



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Joe Piersante of Rochester climbs the gates of the Seneca Army Depot.

similar action at the depot last year.

If found guilty, the two could potentially face sentences of up to six months in jail and fines of as much as \$500. No date for the hearing has been set.

The other nine protesters arrested were issued ban-and-bar letters, warning them that they would face charges if they entered the depot illegally again.

The early-morning protest at the depot was one of two actions staged that day as part of the Rochester-based Faith and Resistance Community's third-annual retreat.

Twenty members of the group — including those arrested at the depot — later occupied the administrative offices of Geneva General Hospital to protest abortions performed at the hospital. The protesters met with the hospital's chief executive officer, James Dooley, and left peacefully. No arrests took place.

The two-day annual Faith and Resistance Retreats are designed to forge a link among such issues as abortion, nuclear weapons and capital punishment under the consistent-ethic-of-life or "seamless garment" concept. This year's event included sessions at Corpus Christi Church, Rochester, on May 10 and at St. Stephen's Church, Geneva, on May 11.

Retreat participants heard presentations from Joe Gump, a former chemical engineer who has served two years in prison for a 1987 anti-nuclear protest; John Dear, SJ, author of *Disarming the Heart: Toward a Vow of Nonviolence and Our God is Non-violent*; Lana Jacobs, director of a Catholic Worker house in Missouri and a former Planned Parenthood employee who took



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Robert Dorscheid of Rochester huddles against the cold during an anti-nuclear protest at the Seneca Army Depot Friday, May 10.



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Carol Crossed (left), John Dear, SJ, (center), and Father James Callan sit behind a basket of fruit which was presented to James Dooley, chief executive of Geneva General Hospital, during an anti-abortion protest there last Friday.

part in abortions and now opposes them; and the Rev. John Walker, a Baptist minister who once served as the executive director of the Diocese of Rochester's Office of Black Ministry.

The depot protest took place after a 6 a.m. Mass outside the base's main gates. Those arrested climbed the facility's fences.

At Geneva General, the protesters occupied the hospital's administrative office's at approximately 2:15 p.m. and requested a meeting with Dooley. In a session that was closed to news reporters, Dooley did talk with protesters, answering questions about the hospital's abortion policies.

According to Diane S. Cox, the hospital's vice president for development and community relations, the protest was

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Activist grandfather continues protesting arms race

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Joe Gump looks more like a grandfather than an ex-convict. He is both.

Gump, the father of 12 children and grandfather of seven, has just completed more than two years in the federal prison in Oxford, Wisconsin. He faces the possibility of serving additional time as well.

In addition, he is married to a convict. His wife of 41 years, Jean, has been in the federal prison in Alderson, West Virginia, since 1986.

Both Joe and Jean Gump chose to risk jail because they believe that nuclear weapons are incompatible with their Catholic beliefs.

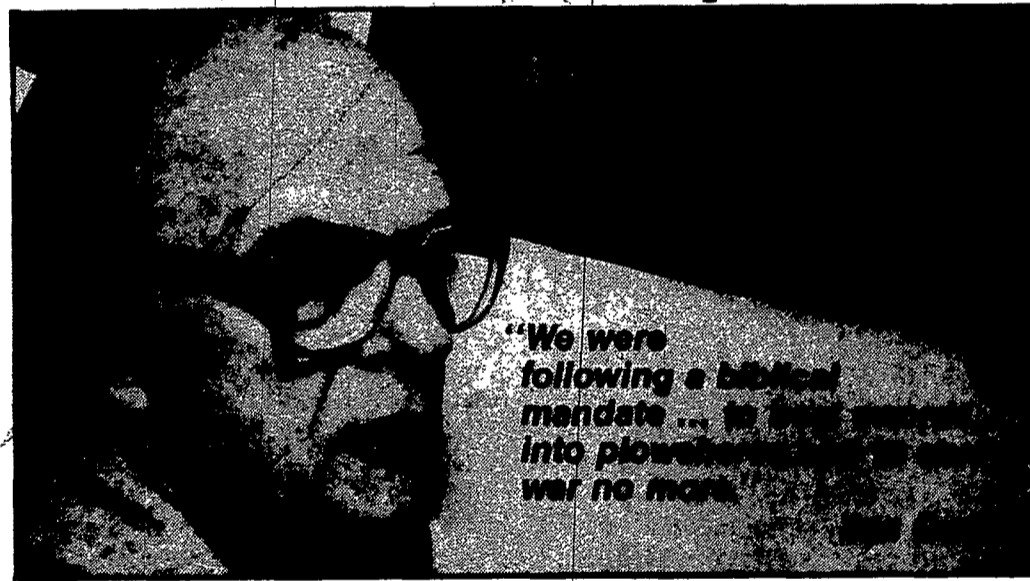
Joe Gump's prison term stems from an anti-nuclear protest on August 5, 1987, in which he repeatedly hit the top of a nuclear missile silo near Kansas City with a sledgehammer, causing approximately \$13,000 in damage. He also poured his own blood over the silo.

"We were following a biblical mandate ... to beat swords into plowshares and to study war no more," he explained.

The sentence Joe served was for the protest. Now he may have to return to jail because he refuses to pay for the damages he caused to the silo.

Gump was in Rochester May 10-11 to take part in the Faith and Resistance Community's third annual retreat. The group's goal is to link together such issues as abortion, nuclear weapons and the death penalty under the consistent ethic-of-life concept. The retreat included an anti-nuclear protest at the Seneca Army Depot — where activists believe nuclear weapons are stored — and an anti-abortion demonstration at Geneva General Hospital.

A decade ago, the thought of attacking a silo would probably not have crossed Joe Gump's mind. An established businessman in Chicago, he was a chemical engineer working for companies that produced



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Anti-nuclear activist Joe Gump of Chicago sits in the living room of the Seneca Women's Encampment, waiting to hear the fate of fellow protesters who had gone over the gates of the Seneca Army Depot.

components for nuclear power and weapons industries.

"I figured nuclear power was safe, efficient," he said.

The path to changing his beliefs actually began in the 1940s when Joe and Jean Gump married and began living near Chicago. The two were active in the Catholic Family Movement, trying to apply Catholic principles to problems affecting not only their family, but their community.

These beliefs led the Gumps to become involved in a number of social and political causes over the years, including marching with Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1960s.

Providing for a growing family and increased responsibility at work gradually forced Joe to curtail his involvement in social and political demonstrations.

Jean, however, remained active. The birth of the couple's first grandson in 1982 prompted her to become even more concerned about issues such as nuclear weapons and power. She became involved with the nuclear freeze movement, traveled

to Washington to discuss nuclear issues, and took part in legal demonstrations.

Joe continued to sit on the sidelines, feeling uneasy with what his wife was doing. "We had some very distressing conversations on this, because she was dead certain on this," he said. "It irked me that she was questioning my technical know-how." But, he added, "her views proved to be more accurate."

His wife tried every legal means to present her views and to challenge the U.S. government's policies toward nuclear weapons and power, Joe said, noting, "Everything that she did was frustrated and never had any obvious effect."

Finally, on Good Friday, 1986, Jean attacked a missile silo near the one Joe would later damage. Her trial opened his eyes, he said.

"I was able to listen for the first time to facts I had not been privy to," he recalled.

For the first time, Gump said, he became fully aware of the effects of the nuclear industry on the environment, its economic

drain on the poor and homeless, and the dangers it posed to workers and people who lived near the plants and mines.

Jean Gump was found guilty and sentenced to eight years in prison. Joe, who was still working as a chemical engineer, arranged his schedule so that he could spend one week a month near her prison. "It wasn't easy," he said. "I certainly missed not having her (home)."

Meanwhile, Joe was becoming even more convinced of the rightness of his wife's actions.

"It's a real problem for a person to understand questioning authority, because our entire upbringing is geared towards learning to be respectful of the law, respectful of authority in an unquestioning way," he said. "What Jean was showing me was that if something doesn't make sense, it should be questioned and shouldn't be followed blindly."

Finally, Joe retired from his company, and committed his own act of civil disobedience in August, 1987.

Joe said that activities such as the protests staged by the Faith and Resistance Community are needed even more now in light of the apparent end to the arms race due to the changes in Eastern Europe in the past year.

"There's a general feeling of euphoria that the arms race is over," he said. "If it is over, then why are they building facilities to replace Savannah River and Rocky Flats (two plants that produce nuclear material for weapons)? Why are we building more Trident (nuclear missile submarines)?"

As for objections that breaking the law accomplishes nothing, Joe admitted that he once shared that belief. He even acknowledged that he wasn't sure if his actions will accomplish anything.

"All I can do is follow my conscience and do what I think (God) wills me to do," he said. "The consequences, I leave up to God."