

# Foundation trying to raise money, awareness

By Richard A. Kiley  
Managing Editor

ELMIRA — In a move hospital officials hope will raise both financial contributions and awareness for a fledgling organization, the St. Joseph's Hospital Foundation is sponsoring appearances by two prominent speakers during the next several months.

The foundation — the fundraising arm of St. Joseph's Hospital — has invited as speakers for upcoming events Robert F. Kennedy Jr., son of the late Attorney General and U.S. Sen. Robert Kennedy, and Sarah Brady, whose husband, James, was critically wounded during the assassination attempt of former President Ronald Reagan in 1981.

Kennedy, a clinical professor and supervising attorney at the environmental litigation clinic at Pace University Law School in Westchester County, will be the featured speaker at a benefit for the foundation and Notre Dame High School on Sept. 10, at 7 p.m.

Brady, who has traveled around the country to advocate handgun control since her husband was wounded by John Hinckley, will speak at the Founder's Dinner in March. Her talk will deal with how a family copes with a crisis situation.

David Sullivan, executive director of the foundation, said he hopes the "celebrity status" of the two speakers will cause people to attend both events.

"Both speakers are known celebrities ... and you can never underestimate the power of a celebrity who has something important



Robert F. Kennedy Jr.



Sarah Brady

to say," remarked Sullivan, who was hired as the first full-time executive director for the foundation in March. Established in 1984, the St. Joseph's Hospital Foundation raises funds to support programs and services at the hospital.

Another of Sullivan's goals is to raise the level of awareness among prospective donors looking for giving options.

"We're trying to give the foundation an identity in the hope that the more people who know about it, the more who will give to it," the Elmira native said, adding that the foundation has been trying to heighten

its image through an aggressive television, radio and newspaper campaign.

"We're also hoping to help educate and inform the community and present some timely issues," he said.

Sullivan acknowledged that he has his work cut out for him. Although economic conditions in Elmira have improved during the last five years, many city residents are still feeling the effects of the flood of 1972. In addition, Sullivan said that Chemung County is home to an overwhelming number of not-for-profit agencies.

"These days, there are so many not-for-profits that are looking for money," said Sullivan, who has spent most of the last nine years in public relations, broadcasting and not-for-profit work — including two years at the Clemens Center. "In a county with about 100,000 people, there are over 60 not-for-profit agencies out there."

Moreover, the 1978 Notre Dame High School graduate said that because St. Joseph's Hospital is not a member agency of the United Way, it must rely on building a base among its individual donors.

"Nationally, over 75 percent of the money given to charities is given by individual donors — whether it's a \$5 donation or a request from an estate," Sullivan said.

According to the foundation's report for first-half earnings, many people are still out there willing to give to a worthy cause. First-half contributions to the foundation for 1990 were up 34.6 percent over the same period in 1989.

Through June 30, 1990, the foundation reported contributions of \$62,075.65, as compared to \$40,602.31 for the first half of 1989.

The upcoming program with Robert Kennedy Jr., whose presentation is entitled "Our Environmental Destiny," will allow the foundation director to work with his alma mater — Notre Dame High School. He said the success of the program could prove fruitful "for the two largest Catholic entities in Elmira.

"(The program) gives us a chance to work together and make new friends," said Sullivan, who helped organize a benefit concert — featuring Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary — for ND last year. "It helps us put a strong foot forward."

Sullivan left open the possibility of holding other events at Notre Dame if the Kennedy program proves successful.

He also set an ambitious goal for his first year as director of the hospital foundation. "The foundation has raised \$100,000 in each of the last four years," he said. "My goal is to raise \$200,000."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The cost of the program and reception featuring Robert Kennedy Jr. is \$30 for adults, and \$15 for students and senior citizens. Group discounts are available.

The foundation is not charging for the Brady lecture at the Founder's Dinner on March 19, 1991.

For information on either event or about the foundation in general, call 607/737-7004.

## Fleming priest spearheads effort to get EWTN available in Auburn

By Paul T. Liotti  
Freelance writer

AUBURN — A diocesan priest is leading a campaign to convince the city's local cable company to add Christian programming to its current lineup.

Father Albert Shamon, administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Church in Fleming, said he initiated the campaign to get Auburn Cablevision to provide a cable channel devoted to religious programming. No such channel is currently available in the Auburn area, he said.

"Our city has seven Catholic parishes and a population of about 32,000, of which 75-80 percent are Catholic," Father Shamon said. "There is no Auburn Cablevision station devoted to Catholic and Christian programming.

"We feel Auburn Cablevision has an obligation to pick up a station that would cater to such a great number of people," Father Shamon added. "If not, then Cablevision is not responsive to the common good."

The priest has formed a group that collected 2,600 signatures from families who want to see the addition of a Catholic network — specifically Birmingham, Ala.-based Eternal Word Television Network. The priest said that because the petition was only signed by heads of households, it represents an even larger number of Auburn citizens who want to see the addition of a Catholic/Christian network.

"There are four sports stations and two rock music stations in the Cablevision lineup," Father Shamon said. "I don't see why (Cablevision) cannot replace one of those stations with EWTN."

The debate over programming reached the halls of the Auburn City Council on July 26, when a public hearing preceded Auburn Cablevision's request to the council for a 10-year renewal of its charter.

The company first received a charter in 1967 and earned a renewal in 1981. Auburn Cablevision serves 13,633 customers in Auburn and the surrounding areas.

At the public hearing, Father Shamon presented the council with the 2,600 signatures. According to a report in

Auburn's daily newspaper, *The Citizen*, Cablevision General Manager Rita Valentino countered by telling Father Shamon and the council that the company plans to add EWTN when it expands to 54 channels over the next five years.

The morning after the City Council meeting, Cablevision owner Frederick R-L Osborne was quoted in *The Citizen* as saying EWTN is "first in line" when a new cable channel becomes available.

Father Shamon hinted in an interview with the *Catholic Courier* Sunday, Aug. 12, that he was pleased to hear that the cable company is considering EWTN, but that the possibility of waiting five years doesn't sit well with him.

"We're going to give Cablevision time, and we'll just have to wait and see how soon it will be before they make a change," he said. "Cablevision is making a decision based on dollars and cents and not what is good for the community. It can either promote or destroy Christian values."

The Fleming priest called EWTN a  
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