

# Responses intensify as gulf war proceeds

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

As the war in the Persian Gulf raged into its second week, people throughout the Diocese of Rochester continued to respond with protests, rallies and vigils.

On Jan. 24, an estimated 150 people marched in front of the Federal Building, 100 State St., Rochester, to protest the war. According to police estimates, a counter demonstration held across the street attracted an equal number of participants. Peace protests will continue on a weekly basis at that site for the foreseeable future, organizers said.

Peace vigils are also being held on a weekly basis in Corning, Ithaca and Elmira, noted Kathy Dubel, peace and justice coordinator for the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry, 160 High St., Elmira.

Meanwhile, buses from Rochester's Corpus Christi Parish, the University of Rochester, the State University of New York College at Geneseo and several sites in the Southern Tier, as well as two vans carrying 16 students from St. John Fisher and Nazareth colleges, traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in a march for peace Jan. 26.

According to park service estimates, approximately 75,000 people took part in the march. March organizers cited a figure of 200,000.

Rochester-area colleges have held or plan to hold forums on the issue of war and the Persian Gulf situation. One such forum — held in the University of Rochester's Wilson Commons on Friday, Jan. 25 — involved presentations from representatives of Rochester's Peace and Justice

Education Center, Amnesty International, and Kuwaiti native Abraham Kharroubi, as well as an open-microphone session for students to express their views and fears concerning the war.

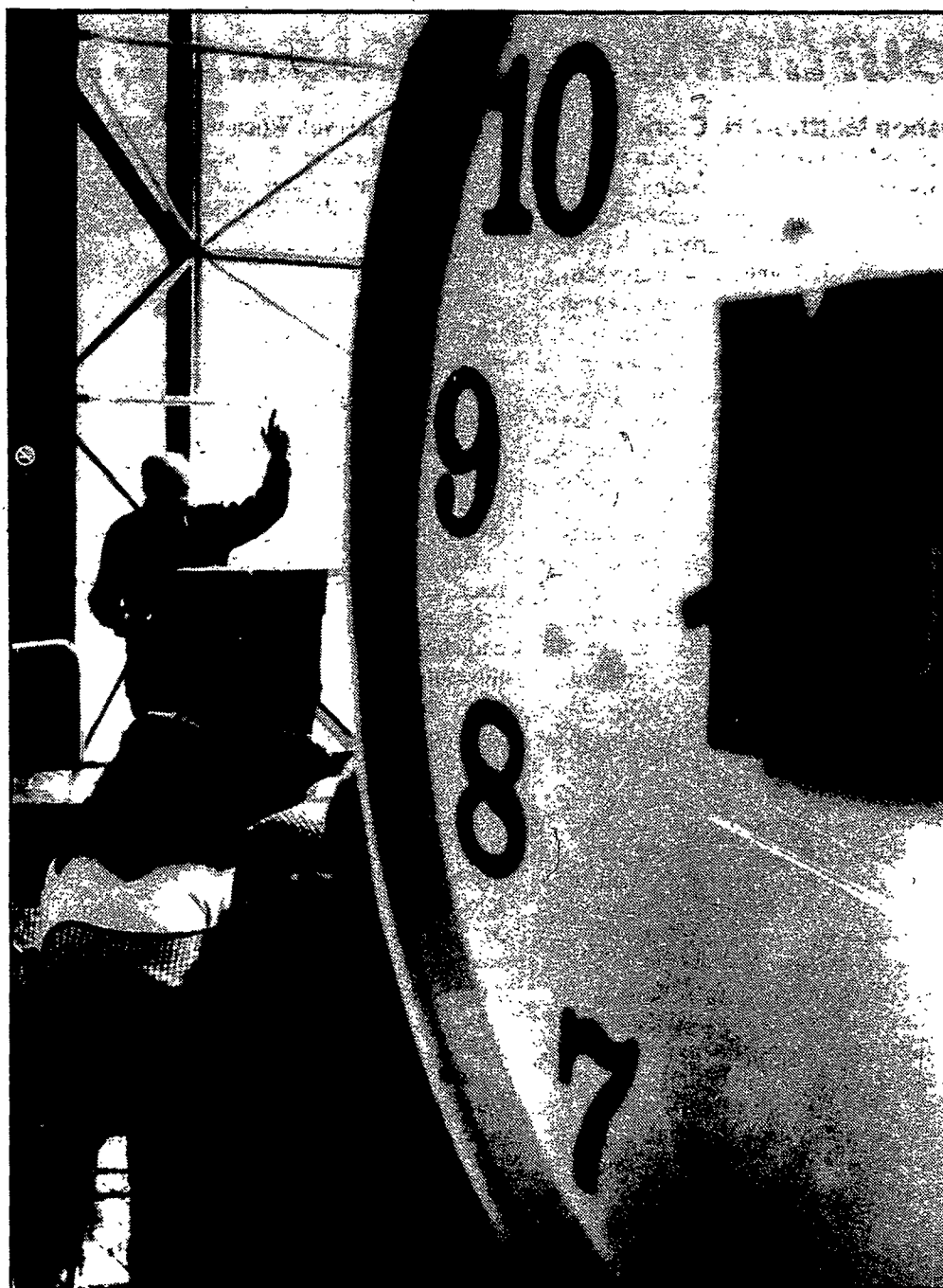
In addition, parishes throughout the diocese have scheduled prayer services in support of the troops and for peace. Elmira's St. Cecilia Church, one of the three parishes making up the Eastside Catholic Churches, is currently hosting a Mass for peace every Tuesday. The Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community has also scheduled an hour of prayer for peace each Sunday. And at St. John Fisher College, three prayer services take place each Wednesday.

Many parishes have joined with other faith communities for ecumenical services, including St. Patrick's in Victor, the Church of St. Mary Our Mother in Horseheads, and Holy Name of Jesus Church in Rochester, which is scheduled to host an interfaith service at 7 p.m. on Feb. 1.

Support groups for families and individuals with loved ones in the Persian Gulf are forming and meeting on a regular basis in homes, churches, and community centers, according to Susan Stehling, coordinator of the Victor-based Military Family Support Network.

The diocesan Office of Social Ministry is — on a weekly basis — sending out information and suggestions to parishes on ways to respond to the war, noted Father John Mulligan, moderator of the Pastoral Center and vicar general.

The three regional offices of social min-  
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Rebecca S. Roth  
Mitchell Kaidy, a member of the Rochester Peace and Justice Center, spoke at the University of Rochester during a forum on the war in the gulf Jan. 25.

# Conscientious objectors prepare for return of draft

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Long before the war in the Persian Gulf became a reality, Rob Pettinger and Jim Rappleye began preparing for the possibility of being called on to fight.

The two men have spent the past few months collecting the documents and other evidence they would need to declare conscientious-objector status.

In declaring that they will not fight in war under any circumstances, Pettinger and Rappleye are expressing deeply held beliefs about violence.

"I don't believe that killing people of any kind or at any time is correct," observed Pettinger, a parishioner at Church of the Transfiguration Church and

a senior at Pittsford Mendon High School.

"It seems like violence only causes more violence," observed Rappleye, who is currently working toward a high-school equivalency diploma.

When the situation in the gulf began to heat up, both men turned to Rochester's Peace and Justice Education Center to learn more about conscientious-objector status, and how to go about applying for it.

Such advance preparation is needed, noted PJEC staff member Jack Bradigan-Spula, because if the U.S. Congress reinstates the draft, potential draftees will have less than 10 days to prove their cases after receiving their induction notices.

"The government's intention seems to be that they won't give people much time to reflect on what they think about war,"

said Bradigan-Spula, who served in the Marine Corps Reserve during the Vietnam War.

To prove conscientious-objector status, an individual must write an essay explaining why he will not fight, secure letters from other people testifying to his sincerity, and show a pattern of involvement in pacifist activities, Bradigan-Spula explained.

Collecting such evidence and writing the essay can take time, Bradigan-Spula said. And even with the evidence in hand, a potential draftee must be ready to discuss his beliefs before a draft board. "The person will be put in a stressful situation," he said.

Thus, Bradigan-Spula said, it is best for someone seeking CO status — and hoping

to clarify his thinking — to work with a counselor.

Pettinger contacted PJEC in September, 1990, because he wanted to learn more about conscientious-objector status.

"I was curious to hear what they had to say because I hear a lot of other stuff from the military recruiters who come to the school," Pettinger explained. "I had the gist of what (CO status) was, but I wanted to know more."

Talking with one of the draft counselors at PJEC, Pettinger was able to solidify his own position.

"Before all this, I was always more of a peaceful person," noted Pettinger, who has participated a number of times in the weekly Thursday evening peace protests at

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