

ABORTION HAS 2 VICTIMS: ONE DEAD. ONE WOUNDED.

 **feminists for life**
of western new york
A Pro Women / Pro Life Organization

Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

VANDALIZED SIGN — Less than two weeks after Feminists for Life of Western New York leased this billboard in downtown Rochester, black paint blocked out the phone number of the group's support line for pregnant women, and added the word "not" to the sign's message.

Agency delays decision on group-home site

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

CHILI — Officials of the Catholic Charities Residential Program have delayed their site decision for a Chili group home following a controversy over the original Hallock Road site. The home would be a residence for developmentally disabled adults.

Barbara Poling, associate director for program development at Catholic Charities, said officials of the residential program were considering a proposed alternative site at 140 Fenton Road.

If that site does not work out, the home will be built at the original site, Poling said. She was not certain when the final decision would be made, but said she hoped the question would be settled by the end of March.

Originally, Catholic Charities had set a Feb. 26 deadline for considering alternative sites for the group home, Poling said.

That deadline was set when Poling learned that town officials had not notified neighbors of the original site that Catholic Charities had selected for the proposal submitted to the Chili Town Board July 16, 1991.

Poling said she learned of this fact at a Dec. 4, 1991, town board meeting at which area residents aired concerns and objections about the proposed site.

Neighbors claimed that the house — which would be more than 4,500 square feet in size — would be too large for the neighborhood.

"We felt the neighbors were not given an opportunity back in July," Poling said. "We just thought it would be a good gesture to extend to them the opportunity to propose other sites."

An informational meeting about the group home proposal was conducted Jan. 26, and five alternative sites were proposed by the Chili Town Board at its Feb. 13 meeting. Poling said that those sites were not acceptable, but that the Fenton Road site, which was

proposed Feb. 21, appeared acceptable.

A decision on the Fenton Road site depends, in part, on whether the current owner is able to separate the one-acre lot from the 28-acre parcel of which it is a part, Poling said.

According to Town of Chili Supervisor Jerome Bixner, an additional factor in the decision is that part of the parcel is waterlogged. Town engineers are currently studying the site's drainage situation, he said.

The proposed home is to house 10 residents. Poling described as "high-functioning." The residents would live in four suites in the house, each of which would have a separate kitchen. The goal is for residents to develop independent-living skills with the hope that some would be able to move some day into supervised apartments.

Bixner, who was elected in November, said neighbors were concerned that the house would dwarf other houses in the neighborhood, but that they were open to the possibility of

building two smaller homes at the site.

But Poling noted that the home is to be built with a grant from the New York state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and that not enough money was available to construct two homes.

Bixner acknowledged that Catholic Charities legally could proceed with the home at the original site, but that officials of the residential program — Poling in particular — had been had responsive to neighbors' concerns.

"As far as I'm concerned, (the contact with Catholic Charities) has been totally professional and totally cooperative," Bixner said.

The Catholic Charities Residential Program currently operates six similar facilities within the Diocese of Rochester in buildings the program converted for use as group homes.

Poling noted that the proposed home would be the first to be built by Catholic Charities.

Controversial physician to speak at Rochester parish

ROCHESTER — Dr. Timothy Quill, a Genesee Hospital internist who made headlines in 1991 for publicly acknowledging that he helped a dying patient commit suicide, is the scheduled speaker for an upcoming program sponsored by St. Mary's Church.

Quill is slated to deliver a lecture, entitled "Death and Dignity: Exploring End of Life Decisions," at 5 p.m. on March 12. The lecture, part of the Downtown Community Forum series at St. Mary's, will take place at the church, 15 St. Mary's Place.

The Rochester physician wrote about the highly publicized case of "Diane" in the March, 1991 *New England Journal of Medicine*. A Monroe County grand jury later cleared Quill of all criminal wrongdoing. In part, the physician justified prescribing the lethal dose of barbituates by stating that "Diane" had requested the drug for just such a purpose.

In addition to currently serving as associate chief of medicine at Genesee Hospital, Quill is an associate professor of medicine and psychiatry at the University of Rochester.

The Rochester physician put himself directly in the spotlight of a debate that has raged throughout the country over physician-assisted suicide, or euthanasia.

The debate was further heightened

by the publication of Derek Humphry's best-selling *Final Exit — The Practicalities of Self-Deliverance and Assisted Suicide for the Dying*, and by the November defeat of Initiative 119, a bill which would have legalized physician-assisted suicide in the state of Washington.

The Catholic Church, which views suicide — including physician-assisted suicide — as tantamount to murder, has been at the forefront of groups opposing euthanasia's legalization. Indeed, the Washington State Catholic Conference so opposed Initiative 119 that it conducted voter-registration drives after weekend Masses in parishes before the referendum.

Sister Joan Sobala, SSJ, pastoral assistant at St. Mary's Church, recalled that Downtown Community Forum's organizers have previously booked controversial speakers, including those whose positions differ from those of the church.

When asked whether forum organizers invited a speaker who would represent views opposed to Quill's, Sister Sobala said the forum's format is not a "debate," but rather an opportunity for speakers to explain their opinions and receive feedback.

For example, she noted that St. Mary's once hosted Democratic Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (30th

district), a pro-choice advocate, whose speech was picketed by pro-life activists who questioned why a Catholic parish was hosting a person favoring legalized abortion. The protesters later joined the discussion inside the church, she recalled.

Sister Sobala noted that Quill's critics should also feel free to attend the forum and express their views to him following his talk.

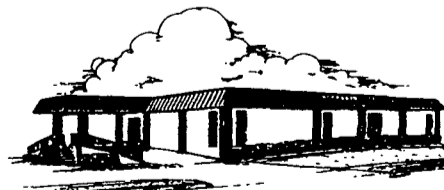
"The Downtown Community Forum is always a program that is open to the public and their viewpoints are also

heard and articulated," she said, adding, "I hope the audience itself will contain people who will highlight and nuance all these elements that need to be discussed at this time."

"We don't avoid the pertinent issues of our society," Sister Sobala continued. "That's precisely why we have our forum. The idea is to deepen the understanding of how complicated issues are and how moral choices are not simple."

— Rob Cullivan

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