

Activists change strategy as trials continue

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Although the "Spring of Life" campaign in Buffalo has ended, fallout from the two weeks of protests continued last week with trials and more pro-life activity.

During trials May 11, 12 and 15, all criminal charges were dismissed against 204 pro-life activists arrested during the campaign from April 20 to May 2.

Of the 204 protesters, 196 tried before Amherst Town Court Judge Sam Maislin May 15 were found guilty of disorderly conduct, which is a violation. Maislin ordered them to stay away for one year from Amherst abortion clinics and the homes of the doctors who operate the clinics.

Carol Crossed of Rochester's Corpus Christi Parish was among the 196 activists whose charges were dismissed.

On May 12, Buffalo City Court Judge Michael Broderick found one pro-life protester — Michael LoParo of Euclid, Ohio — guilty of trespassing. Her sentencing is scheduled for June 8.

The week's trials did not halt pro-life activity, however.

Buffalo police estimate that 300 to 350 pro-life activists staged a prayer vigil May 16 outside the Buffalo GYN Womenservices clinic. About 50 pro-choice demonstrators countered the protest, but police made no arrests.

Pro-life leaders also report that sidewalk counseling has continued at the clinics since the Operation Rescue



AP/Wide World Photos
The Rev. Paul Schenck (left) was among hundreds of protesters arrested during the Spring of Life campaign. The Rev. Schenck upset activists in pro-life and pro-choice camps by displaying a fetus he said had been aborted.

campaign concluded. They added that more vigils — and possibly rescues — will take place over the coming weeks.

Even as trials and demonstrations took place last week, pro-life leaders announced a shift in strategy May 15.

According to Karen Swallow Prior, spokeswoman for Spring of Life, pro-life leaders pledged that some of the more than 390 protesters awaiting trial will request jury trials rather than take part in mass trials. She acknowledged that only those facing criminal charges can request jury trials.

Prior explained that the strategy's purpose is to push courts to dismiss charges against as many activists as possible. She noted that pro-life activists would have preferred mass trials, but that — with the exception of Amherst's Judge Maislin — prosecutors and judges scheduled to hear upcoming cases would not cooperate with pro-life attorneys.

In a telephone interview with the *Catholic Courier*, Erie County District Attorney Kevin Dillon said his office had been willing to discuss plea bar-

gaining with the protesters.

According to Prior, however, the district attorney's office required guilty pleas in return for plea bargaining. Operation Rescue's policy, on the other hand, is for protesters to plead "no contest" to charges.

To ease preparations for the trials, Operation Rescue leaders also recommended May 15 that the approximately 140 protesters still in jail post bail.

This, too, was a change in previous policy, Prior said. She explained that the pro-life leaders decided to recommend posting bail because of the difficulty attorneys had in meeting with clients in the jails.

As of May 18, all but four of the protesters had posted bail, Prior said, noting that those four chose to remain in jail. To help the others post bail, she added, the Buffalo-area pro-life community raised more than \$15,000.

Prior acknowledged that jury trials would slow down the legal process and delay additional actions against the clinics. "Most of our energy right now is being funneled into helping get the trials over with," she said.

At the same time, however, pro-life leaders are preparing for more "street actions" at the clinics, she said.

"The street actions are going to be more frequent and more intense as we clean up the court actions," Prior said, claiming that hundreds of people have signed up to take part in pro-life activities in Buffalo — including more rescues.

Economy, boycott take toll on United Way campaign

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — A boycott waged by a local coalition of church, pro-life, business and community groups against the 1992 United Way campaign may have succeeded in discouraging some contributions to the agency.

But spokeswomen from both the coalition and the United Way said they could not make definite statements about the boycott's effectiveness until the campaign ends this week.

The United Way received 3,000 "no-pledge" cards from prospective donors angered about the agency's decision to continue funding Planned Parenthood, according to Diane Ryan, United Way's vice president of communications. The cards were distributed throughout the area by Citizens for

United Way Responsibility and other coalition groups.

In particular, members of 33 Catholic parishes and 23 inner-city churches signed the cards and sent them to the United Way. The cards stated that the signatories would redirect their funds to other charitable organizations because of United Way's support of Planned Parenthood.

United Way has projected that it will fall more than \$2 million short of its \$38.5 million 1992 campaign goal. However, Ryan maintained that 99 percent of the shortfall is attributable to the area's economic downturn, and that the boycott may account for less than 1 percent of lost donations.

Siobhan Hanna, spokeswoman for Citizens for United Way Responsibility, speculated that the boycott was more successful than United Way ad-

mits, since some Planned Parenthood opponents may have declined to give through their workplaces this year as they had done in the past.

Hanna also questioned how United Way could attribute less than 1 percent of its 1992 campaign shortfall to the coalition's efforts when so many people had sent in "no-pledge" cards.

Thus far, Ryan said, her agency has not had the time to determine how many of those who sent no-pledge cards this year had actually contributed to United Way in the past.

The coalition's boycott apparently had no effect on United Way collections among diocesan employees, according to Sue Staropoli, who served as diocesan coordinator of the diocesan United Way drive.

Staropoli noted that 71 of the 100 employees at the diocesan Pastoral

Center in Gates gave to the campaign this year; 69 employees contributed last year. She pointed out that the Pastoral Center raised \$8,093 — 15 percent more than last year's total — on a 1992 United Way goal of \$9,500.

The anti-Planned Parenthood coalition initiated its boycott because Planned Parenthood — a United Way member agency — has announced plans to open an abortion clinic next year. Following that announcement, United Way permitted Planned Parenthood to remain a United Way agency on the condition that Planned Parenthood would use no United Way funds for the clinic.

But this agreement proved unsatisfactory to Planned Parenthood's opponents, who dismissed claims that the clinic's finances would be kept separate.

Diocese appoints schools superintendent

ROCHESTER — The diocesan schools office has announced the hiring of Timothy W. Dwyer of Traverse City, Mich., as superintendent of schools.

The announcement concludes a search process that began with the Nov. 19, 1990, resignation of former superintendent Brother Brian Walsh, CFC.

Brother Walsh's resignation originally was to have become effective July 1, 1991, but he remained in the post until September of that year. Since then, Sister Mary Ann Binsack, RSM, director of diocesan Faith Development ministry, has been acting superintendent.

The diocese scheduled a press conference for Thursday, May 21, to introduce Dwyer as the new superintendent. He will assume the post sometime in August, Sister Binsack said.

A five-member superintendent search committee, chaired by attorney

Peter J. Spinelli, screened the 24 candidates who applied for the position. The committee, which began meeting in July, 1991, recommended four finalists to the diocese, Sister Binsack said.

Since 1986, Dwyer has served as director of education/superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Gaylord, Mich. Previously he was executive director of Marywood Academy in Grand Rapids, and worked as principal and teacher at a number of Michigan Catholic schools.

Sister Binsack pointed out that Dwyer holds a master of business administration degree in management/personnel administration from Grand Valley State University in Lansing, Mich., and has extensive marketing knowledge.

"We were looking for somebody who could position us for the 21st century," Sister Binsack said.

— Rob Cullivan

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