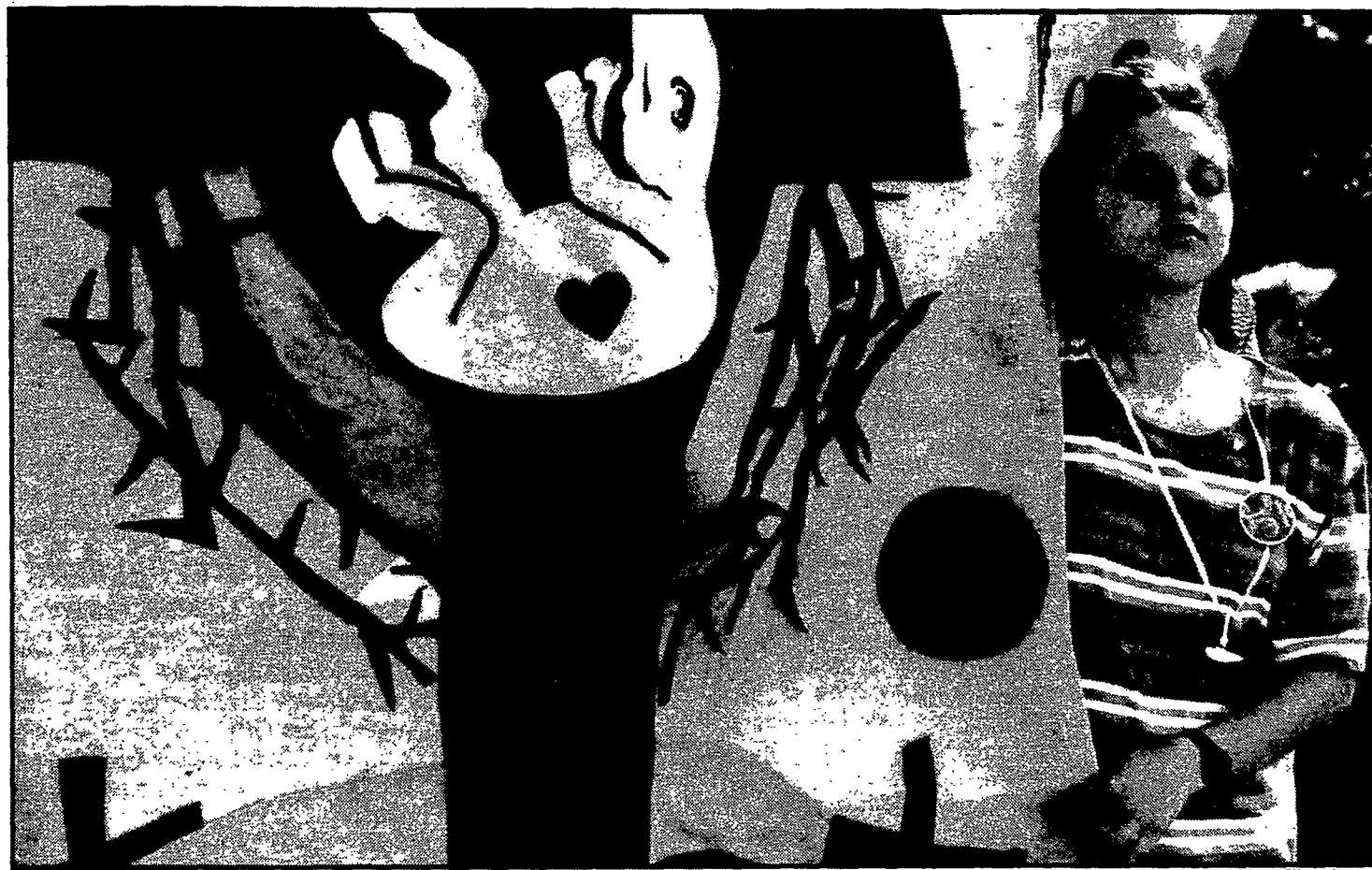


## Pro-life activists plan to target abortion clinic



An unidentified pro-life activist prays in front of Planned Parenthood as part of the June 6 Celebrate Life Rally. File photo

Rescue Rochester has scheduled a week of protests and sidewalk counseling Oct 11-16 at Planned Parenthood, 114 University Ave., site of Planned Parenthood's new abortion clinic.

The weeklong campaign will include picketing, sidewalk counseling and prayer beginning at 9 a.m. each morning and continuing until the clinic closes for the day.

Members also plan to park a rented van near the site as a facility for trained pregnancy counselors to assist women with unexpected pregnancies and offer alternative services.

In preparation for the campaign, a prayer rally has been scheduled for 7 p.m. Oct. 8 at the Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, 820 S. Clinton Ave. Speakers will include Rev. Johnny Hunter, a Buffalo-area pro-life activist; Rev. Ron Hoston, pastor of Rochester's Bethesda Church of God in Christ and one of the leaders of the group of area ministers who opposed the opening of the abortion clinic; and rap musician Michael Peace.

All are invited to the prayer rally.

Volunteers are needed for the campaign. For information or to volunteer, contact Jerry Crawford at 716/254-9282.

## Group asks county to stop jail-expansion plans

### Paper calls for different tactics

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The Committee to Improve Public Safety has released a position paper calling for the Monroe County Legislature to remove a proposed \$13 million expansion of the county jail system from the county's 1994-99 Capital Improvement Program.

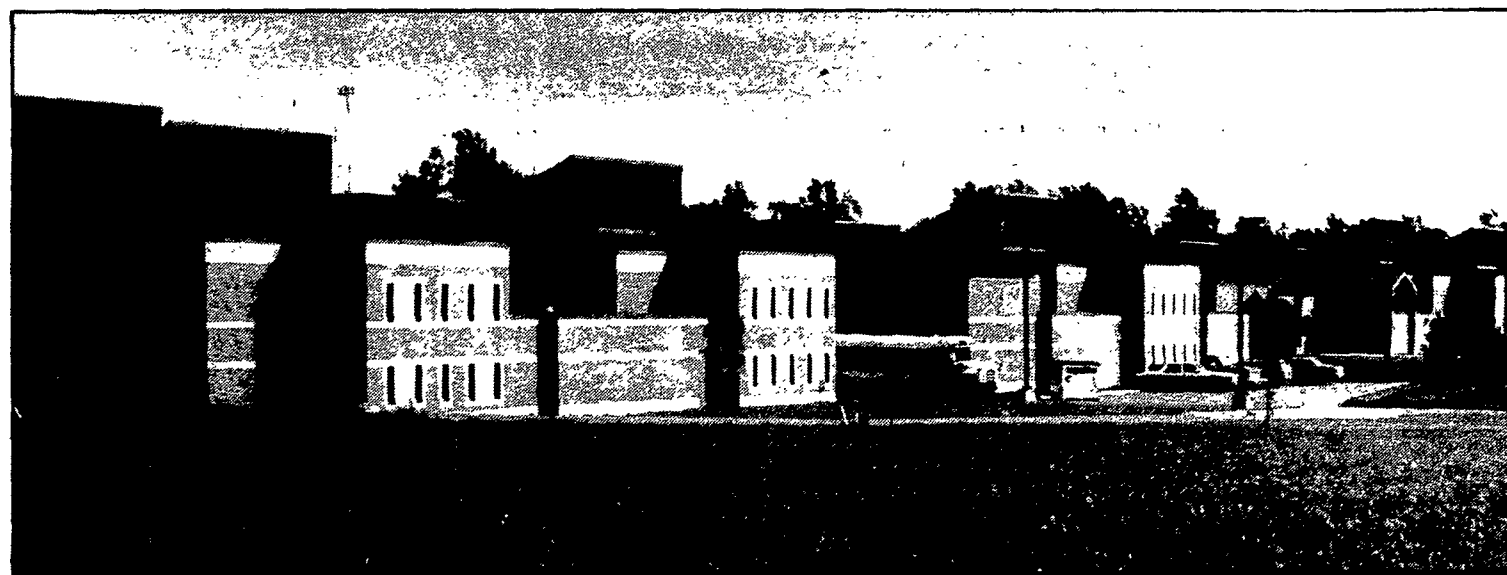
The paper, titled "Alternatives to Jail Expansion: Refocussing Our Community on the Issues of Violent Crime," states that the proposed expansion is "ill-conceived, expensive and will not contribute to public safety and should be removed from any current County Bond proposals."

Members of CIPS spoke with the *Catholic Courier* on Monday afternoon, Oct. 4, at Catholic Family Center, 25 Franklin St. Sister Grace Miller, RSM, director of the House of Mercy, 102 Central Park; Sister Rita Lewis, RSM, who works with Sister Miller; and Carolyn Portanova, executive director of CFC were present at the press conference.

Portanova stressed that she was speaking on behalf of herself, not CFC. The three women also noted that a number of agencies, organizations and individuals also belong to CIPS, a group which was formed to address public safety issues as they relate to the county's jail system.

Other members include James Norman, executive director of Action for a Better Community; John Klofas, professor of criminal justice at Rochester Institute of Technology; and Sister Mary Sullivan, RSM.

According to a copy of the county's proposed capital improvement program provided to the *Courier*, the county wants to construct 90 new jail cells for its downtown Rochester facility.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

A county proposal would expand the Monroe Correctional Facility next to Monroe Community College by 60 jail cells.

"The current downtown jail situation is very crowded and unsafe," the report reads. "This project is necessary for the safety and security of inmates and staff in this facility."

The report notes that failing to expand jail space could mean the county would suffer punitive legal action undertaken by the state or the judiciary system.

The report also cites similar concerns for inmate safety and proposes the construction of 60 new jail cells at Monroe Correctional Facility, located on East Henrietta Road.

But members of CISP argued that expanding the jails will only delay the county from looking into overhauling its criminal justice system, and in particular, the way it treats the poor; minorities; and the drug-abusing offender.

The CISP report stated many "facts" that were put forward in support of alternatives to jail incarceration:

- "Seventy percent of inmates are being held before their trial. They have not been convicted yet of any crime. Only 30 percent of the inmates have been sentenced, with several being held for parole or probation violations."

- "Seventy percent of people who

spend time in jail before trial are held for less than two weeks."

- "Over 80 percent (of inmates) ... are ultimately sentenced to probation or some other sentence which does not involve incarceration. The vast majority are not dangerous and are not awaiting trial for violent criminal acts."

Due to more aggressive law enforcement in city areas, the report also claimed that more poor minority drug-users are arrested than affluent suburban white drug-users despite the fact that both groups statistically use illegal drugs at about the same rate. Affluent whites tend to wind up in drug rehabilitation, whereas poor minorities wind up in jail, CISP members argued.

The report endorsed recommendations made by the Monroe County Bar Association calling for "the elimination of mandatory sentences for non-violent crimes, thereby making available more money for rehabilitative programs and (e)nsuring that adequate jail space exists for long term incarceration of the violent offender."

The report recommends that monies be spent on parental education; training and counseling for petty criminals;

and "easily available substance abuse treatment on demand."

"Now is the time for new thinking and for new action," the report concluded, adding that a series of recommended alternatives to incarceration will be released within the next three weeks.

Robert J. Squires, supervisor of both Monroe County jails, stressed that no blueprints even exist for the jail expansion, and no monies have been approved for their building. He agreed that ideally the need for jail cells would be shrinking, not growing, but such thinking obscures the fact that the jails are already crowded, he explained.

"When you have 10 years of consecutive growth in the jail population, it's foolish not to plan for expansion for more inmates," he said.

John Riley, county government spokesman, echoed Squires' contention. He believes that members of CISP "would be the same people who would complain if the jail is overcrowded." He claimed that the county does aggressively pursue alternatives to jailing offenders, but that officials must be realistic in providing for the growing inmate population.