

Racist fliers found in Auburn school

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

AUBURN — Even as Auburn marked the first anniversary of the successful thwarting of a neo-Nazi rally, the people of this Cayuga County city were forced to deal with yet another racist incident.

On Sept. 30, racist fliers were distributed in the halls and stairwells at Auburn High School. The fliers contained insults targeting Black students at the school.

Although school officials could not be reached for comment or to confirm details about the incident, an Auburn youth minister was sickened by the incident.

"It's the most hateful, disgusting, horrible thing I've ever read," declared Kathleen Fuchs, youth minister at Auburn's St. Alphonsus and St. Mary's parishes.

Fuchs joined Father Lee P. Chase, St. Mary's parochial vicar, and Sister Christine Lloyd, SSJ, executive director of the "Wounded Healers" Bereavement Support Group, in attending an Oct. 3 open meeting at the high school. The after-school meeting was intended to address concerns about the fliers.

Unfortunately, the meeting was not well attended, Father Chase said.

"We were the only clergy there," Father Chase said. In addition, most of the students who attended were black; few white students attended the meeting.

The students who did attend, Father Chase said, shared their frustration over the incident. "There was a lot of pain, a lot of anger," he observed. "I was profoundly saddened by the whole thing."

And the day before the school meeting, a prayer service was held at St. Peter and John Episcopal Church, 173



File photo

A member of the United States of America Nationalist Party last fall displayed his group's flag to an angry crowd in Auburn during a thwarted neo-Nazi rally.

Genesee St., to mark the anniversary of last year's neo-Nazi rally in Auburn.

That rally ended when the small group of neo-Nazis was confronted by approximately 2,000 counter-protesters. The neo-Nazis had to be escorted out of town — for their own safety — by police after a near riot broke out.

On Sept. 25, 1993, the day of the rally, the church had been packed for an ecumenical service to pray against prejudice. The Oct. 2 service, however, drew only approximately 50 people, Father Chase said with obvious disappointment. And, he added, the majority of those people who attended were clergy.

The most recent racist incident comes on top of several other occurrences over the past year, Father Chase noted. Those other incidents included the placing of racist leaflets in the pockets of various clothing items in Auburn's retail stores, and the distribution of cassette tapes with racial slurs.

Fuchs said the Sept. 30 incident at the high school prompted her youth-group members to consider ways to respond. At an Oct. 8 meeting held at St. Mary's Church, youth-group members discussed racism, and possible responses.

Some of the youths suggested distributing "love fliers" to counter the hate fliers distributed at the school, or taking part in an after-school unity club to promote discussion and interaction among students of all races. They also discussed holding a "prejudice-reduction workshop" as a youth-group activity. In addition, Fuchs is talking with school officials about offering prejudice-reduction and conflict-resolution workshops at the high school.

Youth-group members also talked about the possibility of holding a prayer service across the street from the school the morning of Oct. 12. Fuchs had to discuss the plan with school officials; due to the Columbus Day holiday she was not able to confirm specific details of the event before the *Catholic Courier's* deadline.

She added that two long-term projects are also in the works.

One project, suggested by the students, calls for people to place one lighted Christmas candle in their windows "as a sign of love and peace, and a sign that we are against what happened in the high school," Fuchs said.

And Fuchs is considering writing a

Continued on page 5

Pro-life group rallies at Women's Rights Park

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

SENECA FALLS — According to this rally's speakers, Women's Rights National Historical Park was a paradoxical — yet vital — setting for their cause.

"I could not believe, in my wildest dreams, that this Catholic table would be here today," said Martha Hurlbut, referring to publications being sold in front of Women's Rights Park by the Auburn-based John Paul II Family Faith Center.

Hurlbut, a resident of Phoenix, N.Y., located in the Syracuse diocese, told rally participants in her closing remarks that "we are not afraid to talk about God in Seneca Falls."

A few moments earlier, keynote speaker Judith Brown, president of the Washington, D.C.-based American Life League, described the Women's Rights venue as "this terrible place."

"You see a lot of pain and anger and hurt (represented in the museum exhibits). And I'm not sure that's so good," explained Hurlbut, who added that none of the exhibits made any reference to religion.

To strengthen the harmony of Catholic women who support traditional church teachings, Hurlbut organized an outdoor rally held at the park last Saturday morning, Oct. 8. Approximately 50 people — mostly Catholic adults from the Syracuse and Rochester dioceses — gathered for the rally, which took place as part of a weekend program titled "Beacon of Women's Unity."

The event occurred in the courtyard of the same site where, three years earlier, Hurlbut was verbally abused — and, in one instance, even spat upon — as she picketed a speech given by former vice-presidential candidate Geraldine Fer-

raro, a noted pro-choice advocate.

Yet one of Saturday's speakers, Donna Steichen, maintained that "women's rights" becomes a misguided expression when those rights include abortion.

"Feminism is a rival belief system," said Steichen, who espouses Catholic principles for women in which "following Christ is always the first priority."

"Movement feminists do not talk about wanting to take up their cross for Christ. Instead, they talk about empowerment," added Steichen, author of the 1991 book *Ungodly Rage: The Hidden Face of Catholic Feminism*.

"How can a man respect a woman who kills children and says she has the right to do so?" asked Brown.

Also included on the weekend agenda was a Mass held at St. Patrick Church on Oct. 9 to acknowledge the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary celebrated two days earlier. The Mass was immediately followed by a service at St. Columbkille Cemetery during which Father David N.

Gramm, St. Patrick's pastor, dedicated a memorial to the unborn child.

Despite the potentially explosive circumstances surrounding the subject matter, Hurlbut reported that no confrontations emerged over the weekend with pro-choice groups.

"The spirit that was intended should not cause alarm," said Hurlbut. "We're not 'Hate-you, in-your-face' Nazi feminists, or whatever Rush Limbaugh calls them."

Hurlbut added that this was the first time Women's Rights Park had ever granted a special-use permit for an event.

On these levels, the rally was successful. Yet Marsha Bisgrove, who operates the John Paul II Family Faith Center, pointed out that — despite nice weather — the sparse attendance for Saturday's rally was not an encouraging sign.

"(It) shows the crisis of the lack of concern by Catholics on pro-life issues," Bisgrove concluded.

Obituary

Brother Ehmman, OCSO; helped found abbey

PIFFARD — Brother Alexis Ehmman, OCSO, one of the founding members of the Abbey of the Genesee in Piffard, died Tuesday, Sept. 6, 1994, at the abbey. He was 83.

Born in Offenbach, Germany, on Sept. 13, 1910, the former Valentine Ehmman emigrated to Chicago in 1927. In 1938, while serving as a Dominican tertiary, he took a retreat at the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani in Gethsemani, Ky. After choosing to stay, he entered the abbey on July 19, 1938. He

made his solemn profession as a member of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance on March 19, 1944.

On April 5, 1951, Brother Alexis arrived in Piffard to become one of the founders of the Abbey of the Genesee, 3258 River Road. He served the abbey for many years as community cook, interior cellarer and bookkeeper. He remained active until his death.

Brother Alexis celebrated his 50th jubilee earlier this year.

Cluster plans mission on many faces of Jesus

PALMYRA — St. Anne's Church in Palmyra and St. Gregory's in Marion have scheduled a mission titled, "The Many Faces of Jesus," to run from Oct. 16 to 20. The mission will take place each evening from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at St. Anne's Church, 136 Church St.

Presenters will focus on the following aspects of Jesus:

- Father David Simon, pastor of St. Margaret Mary Church in Apalachin, will discuss "Jesus as a Gentle Friend — Come and See" on Oct. 16.

- The Oct. 17 presenter, Teryle Maar, director of the Children's Peace Choir, will focus on "Jesus as Lover — One Who Dares Me to Trust."

- On Oct. 18, Father Tim Keating, director of the Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua, will address "Jesus as Reconciler — One Who Has an Understanding Heart."

- Kathleen Quinlan, director of Isaiah House, a Rochester home for the dying, will talk about "Jesus as Suffering Servant — I Hold You, You Hold Me," on Oct. 19.

- The mission concludes on Oct. 20 with Father Charles F. Mulligan, co-pastor of St. Michael's Church in Penn Yan and St. Andrew's in Dundee, reflecting on the theme, "Jesus as Church — Jesus in One Another."

Catholic Charities sets two programs in Tier

ELMIRA — Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier, 1700 College Ave., will host two public programs in mid-October.

On Saturday, Oct. 15, members of the Southern Tier Catholic Parish Legislative Advocacy Network will meet from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for a briefing on current federal and state issues.

On Tuesday, Oct. 18, a workshop on domestic violence will take place from 2 to 4 p.m. The session will explain why men batter; why women stay with abusive partners; current New York state legislation; and what parish communities can do to help stem this type of violence. October is Domestic Violence Awareness/Prevention Month.

Registration is required for both events. Call 607/734-9784.

Corpus gala planned funds for outreach

ROCHESTER — Corpus Christi Parish will host its 19th annual Heart of the City Gala on Saturday, Oct. 15, at the Riverside Convention Center, 123 E. Main St.

A 6 p.m. reception will be followed by a buffet dinner and dancing at 7 p.m. A Broadway revue, titled "Regards to Broadway," will feature the music of Nik Lite, a scaled-down version of the popular group Nik & The Nice Guys.

Rochester Mayor William A. Johnson Jr. will give a special invocation at the gala. Proceeds will benefit the parish's various outreach ministries, including a health center, child-care program, homeless shelter, home for the dying, low-cost clothing store, and a ministry for ex-offenders.

Tickets are \$60 each. Volunteers are still needed. For information, call 716/436-1277 or 482-6256.