

DIOCESAN NEWS

Controversial program prompts cable protest

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

GREECE — A group of Greece ministers is urging people to either cancel their subscriptions to Greater Rochester Cablevision, or ask the company to install a special blocking device because the cable company is carrying a controversial program on a leased-access channel available throughout Monroe County.



GRC began carrying the show, titled "Life Without Shame," on channel 26 midnight Oct. 30. The program, which features nudity, and crude and suggestive language, has aired on GRC's public-access channel in the City of Rochester for about 15 months.

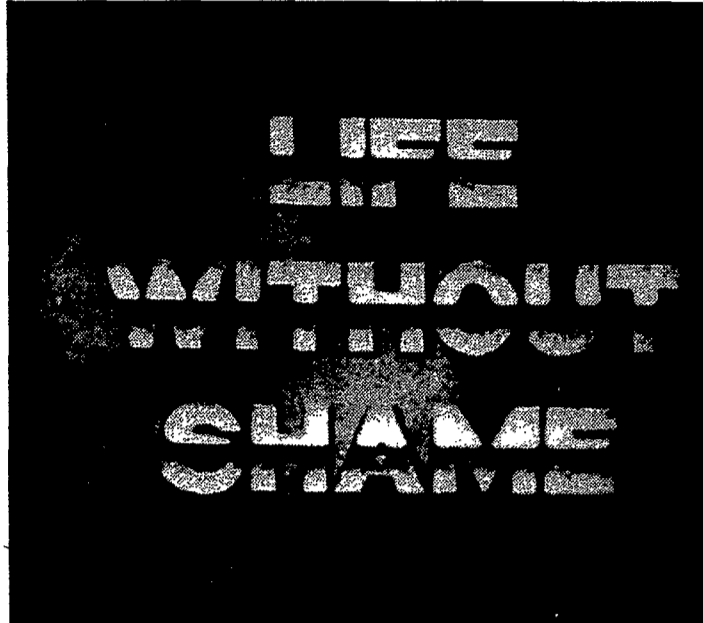
According to Rev. Marc Maffucci, pastor of the Latta Road Baptist Church, area ministers are asking hundreds of their congregation members to take part in the protest because the ministers claim GRC did not do all that it could have to control or limit county-wide airing of the controversial program.

"Am I willing to pay for a product that brings 'that' into my home, and am I willing to pay for a company who will not listen?" Rev. Maffucci said. "No. Because my voice is not being listened to in terms of the services on GRC, I don't want that service."

But Tony Marino, vice president for GRC, said that the company's hands are tied because state and federal laws require that cable companies provide leased-access channels, and that programs must be accepted and broadcast on these channels without censorship.

"I cannot not carry a program based on content," Marino said. Nor can he force the program's producer, Tom Loce, to broadcast the show on a pay-per-view basis.

"We did offer, but he's not interested in that option," Marino said.



'Life Without Shame' Oct. 30 began airing throughout Monroe County on leased-access channel 26.



Religious channels like Eternal Word Television Network — which includes the 'Mother Angelica Live' program — are also part of Greater Rochester Cablevision's offerings but subscribers must pay extra for the channel.

Marino said that the people who do not want the program aired into their homes can either rent a converter through which they can control access to the channel, or have GRC install — free of charge — a blocking device that will prevent the channel from coming into their homes. As of Oct. 28, he said, approximately 25 people had requested installation of the blocking device.

But Rev. Maffucci asked why people should have to pay for the control boxes to limit access to the channel, or have the entire channel and its other programs blocked because of this one show, even though they will have to continue to pay for the channel as part of the basic cable package.

Rev. Maffucci said one option GRC might consider is scrambling the signal during the program's airing so that people who want to view it will have to rent descrambling devices.

"Put the burden on those who want to bring it in and not on those who want to keep it out," Rev. Maffucci said.

Rev. Maffucci said he recognized that GRC is subject to state and federal laws in terms of airing such programming. But he argued that GRC could have done more to make it difficult for the program to get on the county-wide access channel, or scheduled it for an hour when fewer young viewers could see it.

"I have a personal opinion that GRC did not do all that it could have to have prevented this from happening," Rev. Maffucci said.

The protest plan calls for people to cancel their subscriptions in phases, staggering it out over the month so that it will have greater impact, Rev. Maffucci said. He already has lined up 60 people from his church to cancel their subscriptions or to order the blocking device on Nov. 1, he claimed. And he is urging people in Rochester's other suburbs, churches and denominations — including Catholics — to follow their example.

Among those ready to cancel is Latta Road Baptist member Diane Palvino.

"I don't want that kind of program coming into my home," Palvino said, adding that she is also puzzled why such programs are part of the basic package, while religious networks, such as Mother Angelica's Eternal Word Television Network, cost extra.

She was so upset over the program that she has written to a number of public officials, including Rochester Mayor William A. Johnson Jr. who, she observed, has been speaking out against any violence in the city.

"I told him a kind of show like that that denigrates women doesn't help his cause," Palvino said.

Likewise, Rev. Maffucci argued that programs such as "Life Without Shame" feed into a much greater problem in society — a problem people of faith must address.

"I believe strongly that pornography is so saturating our society and clouding our judgments," Rev. Maffucci said. "There's a moral compulsion to put action into words."

Attorneys spar over defendant's writings

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer



ROCHESTER — According to federal prosecutors in the Brink's trial, Charles M. McCormick's writings indicate that he was greedy enough to allegedly conspire with a priest, an ex-cop, and an illegal Irish immigrant to pull off the fifth-largest heist in U.S. history.

But according to defense attorneys, McCormick's writings, obtained by investigators searching his Manhattan apartment where stolen cash was found, were composed long before the robbery, and were created with satirical intent.

So went Halloween morning in the trial of four defendants charged in connection with the \$7.4 million robbery of the Rochester Brink's armored car depot on Jan. 5, 1993. The trial is taking place in the Kenneth B. Keating Building, 100 State St.

In addition to McCormick, a New York City GED teacher and social worker, three other men face charges in the case: Thomas F. O'Connor, a retired Rochester police officer and former Brink's employee; and two other New York City-area residents: Father Patrick Moloney, a Melkite Catholic priest; and Samuel Ignatius Millar, 39, an illegal alien, and owner of a Queens comic book store.

Prior to the Oct. 31 proceedings, the week of Oct. 23-28 saw some of the most damaging testimony against the defen-

dants when an FBI agent testified to the jury about hundreds of thousands of dollars in stolen money found in McCormick's apartment, located at 330 First Ave.

The money was stored in suitcases in an apartment closet. The suitcases were exhibited before the jury on Friday morning, Oct. 28. One such exhibit was a brown-tweed suitcase that had an airline sticker with Father Moloney's name inside. The suitcase with \$337,025 inside was confiscated by police in November of 1993.

The prosecution also seemed to imply Millar's connection with the stolen money when its witnesses repeatedly noted that plastic covers designed to hold comic books — like the ones Millar sold — were also found in McCormick's apartment.

Earlier in the week, surveillance videotapes had also shown Millar and

Father Moloney entering and exiting McCormick's apartment.

Despite the previous week's somewhat dramatic testimony, no courtroom moments were quite like one of the longest — and, at times, funniest — struggles over the attempted introduction of evidence against McCormick Oct. 31.

John Speranza, McCormick's attorney, vehemently objected when FBI Special Agent Leonardo Hatton testified that investigators confiscated an article McCormick wrote in October, 1983, titled "For the Love of Money."

At the request of Speranza, U.S. District Judge David G. Larimer told the jury to leave the courtroom before he heard Speranza further elaborate his objection.

After the jury was excused, Speranza noted that the article, published in the campus newspaper of Connecticut's Fairfield University, was written with an aim to satirize greed. Yet, the prosecution

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Marino's youth noted
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FRI. NITE, NOV 11
GOSPEL SING CONCERT
Time: 7pm-9pm
"Old Time Southern Gospel Singing"
Hosted by Donnie Lee Bailes and Band
Buffet Dinner at 9pm
We ask you to bring a dish to pass please.
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