

To Life!

Life chains slated for October 1

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

Catholics in Brockport, Hornell, Owego and Rochester will join the national Life Chain campaign Oct. 1.

Participants will silently and prayerfully line roads for one hour to draw attention to abortion. Many plan to hold signs bearing such sayings as "Abortion Kills Children" or "Jesus Forgives and Heals."

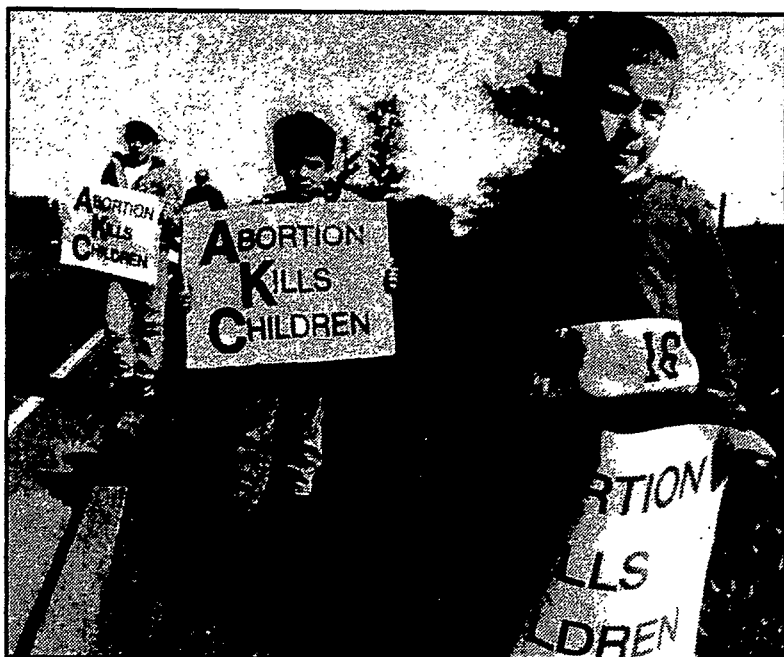
The chains in the diocese will be held in conjunction with chains being staged in hundreds of cities nationwide. In 1994 — the fourth year of the annual national effort — chains were organized in about 900 communities.

Jim Cox, coordinator of the Rochester chain, pointed out that the event is legal and non-violent. But, he added, local and national organizers are concerned that numbers might be down this year because people are apprehensive about legal actions targeting some prolife activities.

"I think FACE (the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act) has scared off some people," Cox said.

The act — signed into law by President Bill Clinton May 26, 1994 — sets fines and jail terms for unlawful demonstrators at abortion clinics. It bars force, the threat of force or physical obstruction aimed at injuring, intimidating or interfering with patients, or providers of abortions.

"The tragedy is how easily it has intimidated Christians," lamented Royce Dunn, the national director of the Life Chain campaign, who estimated this year chains will be formed in



File photo
Tim McMahon (from right) joined brothers Sam and Alan Jones as part of the Finger Lakes Life Chain along routes 5 and 20 in Geneva last October. A Life Chain has not been planned for the Finger Lakes region this year.

just 800 communities.

Beyond fear of FACE, Dunn also attributed the expected falloff to people who have been involved with chains before and who are seeking other ways to oppose abortion, and to a "lack of understanding of the holocaust."

"We just don't grasp it," Dunn continued. "We are living through a holocaust just like the German churches did. You can't have a holocaust unless good people are lukewarm."

Cox noted that the chain participants are not subject to FACE because the chains are not taking place at abortion clinics and are intended to be peaceful.

"This event is a prayerful kind of thing," Cox observed.

Gretchen McManus, coordinator of the Hornell chain, pointed out that to help empha-

size the prayerful nature of the event, the chain in Hornell is being called a "Concert of Prayer."

Participants in the Hornell chain are being asked to meet at the Hornell Burger King at 2:45 p.m. They will then be given sheets to help guide them in their prayers as they spread out along the chain route from 3 to 4 p.m.

The Brockport chain is scheduled from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. along Main Street. Members of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish will be stationed in front of the church at 152 Main St.

The Tioga County Life Chain is scheduled for 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. in downtown Owego.

The Rochester chain will take place along East Avenue, from the Liberty Pole to Winton Road, between 2 and 3 p.m.

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