

DIOCESAN NEWS

Activist claims agency OK'd 'immunization' plan

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Does Planned Parenthood aim by the year 2008 to establish mandatory programs for "conception immunization" of preteenage children in the United States? That's the claim made by James W. Sedlak, founder of STOPP International (Stop Planned Parenthood International), but Planned Parenthood strongly contests his allegations.

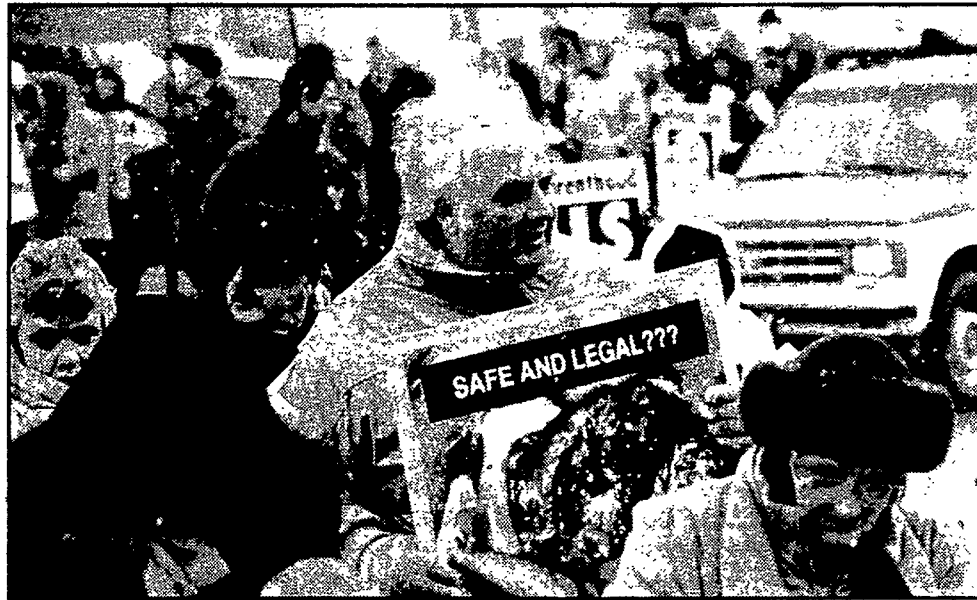
Sedlak, who spoke at a New York Lambs of Christ Feb. 14 benefit dinner, made the allegation and several other charges during telephone interviews with the *Catholic Courier*.

Officials from both Planned Parenthood's Rochester and national offices denied Sedlak's contentions.

Carol Love, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Rochester and the Genesee Valley, said her organization would never support such mandatory conception immunizations.

"(Sedlak's) contention would be totally inconsistent with the mission of Planned Parenthood," Love said when contacted for a reply. "Our mission ... is to support voluntary decision-making in regards to conception and procreation."

And a spokesman for Planned Parenthood's national offices in New York City echoed Love's comments. The source, who asked to remain anonymous, added



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

James W. Sedlak (center), head of STOPP International, marches Feb. 15 with protesters outside Planned Parenthood's Rochester offices, 114 University Ave.

that Planned Parenthood has even opposed welfare-reform proposals that penalize women on welfare for having children.

In addition to his speech before 250 people at the Party House in Chili, Sedlak joined a similar number for a "Pro-Life Rosary night" outside Planned Parenthood's Rochester offices Feb. 15.

Since founding STOPP in 1985, Sedlak

has aided parents' groups and pro-life organizations throughout the nation in fighting Planned Parenthood's abortion clinics, and programs for sex education and birth control.

"You already have all kinds of mandatory immunization," he said, noting that children must be inoculated against various diseases before attending school.

"You would simply add conception to the list," he said during the interview, which took place prior to his Feb. 14 talk.

Sedlak based his charge against Planned Parenthood on a 1985 document titled "Inventing the Future: Alternatives to Adolescent Pregnancy," a report issued by an adolescent-pregnancy conference in Fort Worth, Tx. Conference participants included representatives from Planned Parenthood offices in

Texas, Iowa and Canada.

The document, which was reviewed by the *Catholic Courier*, envisions a future in which so many adolescents are becoming pregnant that the federal government mandates that they be implanted with contraceptive devices. The document states that such devices could be "turned off" at the age of 21 and leaves open the option of reversing immunization.

Although Sedlak was able to document the participation of Planned Parenthood representatives at the conference, he acknowledged that those representatives never officially endorsed the idea of mandatory conception immunization.

Sedlak, who is Catholic, said STOPP is a Christian activist organization that has a mailing list of 10,000 people. He said the organization, based in La Grangeville, N.Y., supports picketing, sidewalk counseling and other activities in its efforts to oppose Planned Parenthood.

A retired research physicist and corporate manager for IBM in Poughkeepsie, Sedlak said he has been active in the pro-life movement since the early 1980s.

"There's no reason to kill anybody, especially an innocent human being," he said.

"We encourage people to fight (Planned Parenthood) at the local level," he said. "If you can't get Planned Parenthood out of your own community, you can't expect to get them out of the country."

Among other speakers at the Feb. 14 dinner were Father Albert Shamon, a *Courier* columnist and administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel in Fleming, N.Y., and Father Norman Weslin, OS, founder of the Lambs of Christ national organization.

Father Weslin and 10 other activists currently face federal charges of blockading Planned Parenthood's Rochester offices in December 1996.

Ithaca school hits the airwaves

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Unprecedented efforts — applauded by Principal Diana Baker as her school's "most innovative" public-relations campaign — are raising the visibility of Immaculate Conception School in Ithaca.

Immaculate Conception went all out with radio advertisements, displays at local businesses, and radio and television interviews to promote its virtues during Catholic Schools Week (Feb. 10-14).

Immaculate Conception, 320 W. Buffalo St., has been providing Catholic education in Ithaca since 1884. Yet George Frantz — who directed the recent campaign — felt the pre-K through eighth school has traditionally maintained a low profile.

"A lot of people in Ithaca really hadn't heard of Immaculate Conception School. We've been sort of quietly going about being excellent," Frantz said.

The volume certainly has certainly been turned up a few notches, beginning with some radio spots that are continuing to air on WHCU-AM 870; WYXL-FM 97; WTKO-AM 1470; and WQNY-FM 103.7.

The public service announcements were taped by four members of the Immaculate Conception student council: eighth-grader Kyle Franklin; seventh-grader Norbert

Schickel; sixth-grader Elizabeth Zaharis; and fifth-grader Claire Louge.

Kyle said he was eager to lend his voice to the radio project.

"I like the school a lot. You get a lot of one-on-one attention," Kyle said. "It's definitely increased my interest in learning."

Other media exposure has included a television feature on NewsCenter 7; a radio profile on WHCU for which Baker was the featured guest; and a photo in the *Ithaca Journal* in which Father Bernard Carges, Immaculate Conception Church's pastor, was shown administering ashes to Elizabeth Zaharis on Ash Wednesday.

In addition, portraits of past Immaculate Conception graduating classes, including prominent community members, have been exhibited at several Tompkins County businesses.

Frantz added that the publicity push already appears to be yielding positive results, based on increased attendance at a Feb. 10 open house.

These efforts are vital for a school that has struggled with enrollment in recent years, he noted. Immaculate — the only Catholic elementary school in Tompkins County — currently has 208 students.

Simply by increasing word of mouth, the campaign is bound to attract future students, Baker added.

Upcoming Supplements

ARMCHAIR COLLEGE FAIR

Publication Date: Feb. 27 — Deadline: Feb. 13

(Bonus distribution to high school juniors & seniors)

Our Armchair College Fair supplement provides an up-to-date review of higher education for readers young and old — from the high school junior just starting to consider college options and the senior who's been postponing her decision, to the empty-nesters looking for ways to broaden their horizons.

RETIREMENT

Publication Date: March 20 — Deadline: March 6

The approach of the "golden years" is of special interest to *Courier* subscribers. This special supplement will offer retirement information from the unique perspective provided by Catholic teaching and values. Areas to be covered include financial planning and money management, volunteering as a way of keeping active, travel and health-related issues for seniors.

MILESTONES

Publication Date: April 17 — Deadline: April 3

This third-annual supplement will honor the significant achievements of priests and religious celebrating jubilees of their vocations, and of those who are retiring from active ministry. It will provide biographical sketches of those in the diocese celebrating such milestones, and will focus on their lives as models for others considering vocations.

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