

Crime

Continued from page 1

Interfaith Action also has helped church neighborhoods tackle litter, inadequate lighting at night, and garbage problems. The organization, an offshoot of Social Action Ministry, is funded by its member churches, individuals, Catholic Family Center, Campaign for Human Development and other contributors. Its members include Holy Ghost Church, the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward, St. John the Evangelist Church in Spencerport, St. John the Evangelist Church on Humboldt Street and St. Rita's Church in Webster, according to Patrick-Maxwell.

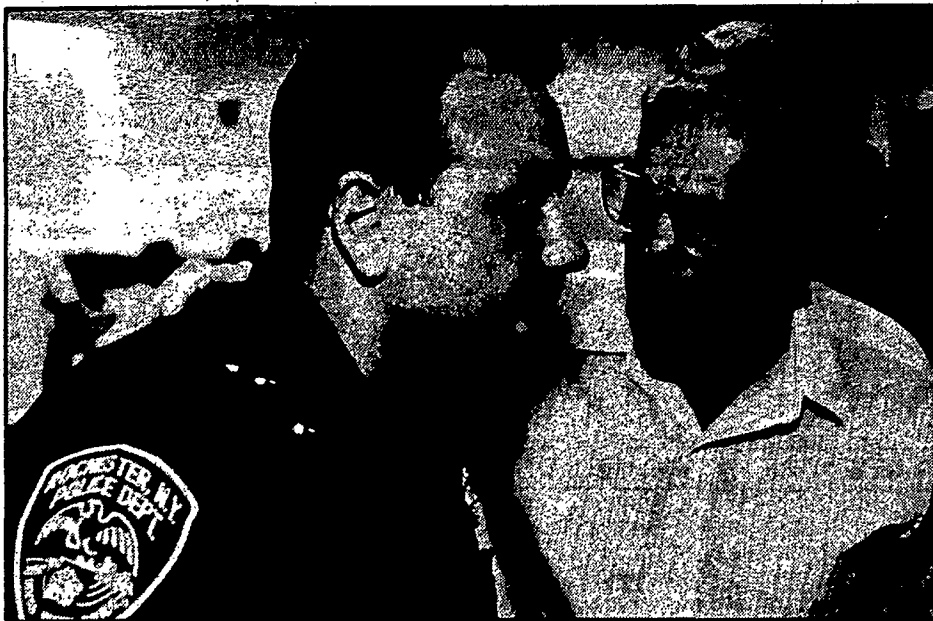
He and the Interfaith Action Local Organizing Committee at Holy Rosary examined city police staffing statistics obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, met with Rochester Police Chief Robert Duffy April 6, and began a push for what it calls community policing — emphasizing a greater police presence.

LOC-sponsored meetings for the public, featuring Chief Duffy and a dozen other officers of varied rank, brought out 280 residents April 27 and 170 on June 22. Between those meetings, the chief and officers walked with residents to discuss neighborhood trouble spots.

Praying for safety

"I'm glad so many people were there," said Karen Etheridge, a Holy Rosary parishioner, of the meetings. She lives on Maryland Street with her husband and five children, ages 2 to 16.

"I am just praying my family stays safe," Etheridge said. They'd moved into the area about a year ago, she said, to be within walking distance of grocery stores and schools, as well as to be on the bus line. Her husband was disabled in a bicycle accident and she has had foot surgery.



Ange DePascale discusses crime with Rochester police officer Patrick Plano June 22 at Holy Rosary School.

Now she worries about four drug houses on the street, she said. People, some driving BMWs, some wearing corporate ID badges, park in front of her house, spend a few minutes in one of the houses and leave.

"If you were company, you'd stay at least a half-hour to be polite," she noted.

The activity starts at 7:30 a.m. and continues till 2 or 3 the next morning, she said.

"I'm from the country, I wasn't brought up around all this stuff going on," she said, explaining she's from Wolcott in eastern Wayne County.

"It looked like a nice apartment. But the neighbors aren't what I'm used to. I'm used to going to have coffee with the neighbors, but I don't want to have coffee with these people."

After sharing her concerns with an Interfaith Action member on a church retreat, she joined the LOC.

Other kids on the block

This particular Interfaith Action project provides one of the newer approaches to the numerous ones fighting crime in their own ways. The organization played a key role, for example, in seeing legislation passed allowing the city to close businesses involved in illegal operations.

PAC-TAC (Police And Citizens Together Against Crime) is one of the oldest approaches, begun in 1973 in Rochester.

PAC-TAC volunteer Virginia Sawdey, also a Holy Rosary parishioner, is 75 and walks a few hours two or three times a week for the Lake Section.

"My doctor is elated I'm doing PAC-TAC," she said, "because my blood pressure is 120 over 80."

Besides offering great exercise, she said, PAC-TAC involvement has social benefits.

"When you're tired after working all day long, going out in the street talking to people, meeting people makes all the difference in your life," she said, explaining she runs a day-care center.

At the same time, the walks sadden her. "I feel so bad because some of these elderly people, when you stand there and talk to them, they say, 'We don't know what to do. We lock our doors.' I tell them to try not to live in fear; the more you live in fear, the more they do to antagonize you."

She said the house next door has been burglarized, several others on her street have been inhabited by drug dealers, and neighbors have been arrested for everything from drug possession to rape.

Sawdey, named PAC-TACer of the year twice by her section, has ridden in the wee hours with police three times.

She also works through NIMROD (Neighbors in Motion — Root Out Drugs) and the Edgerton Neighborhood Association, and trained through the Civilian Police Academy, even learning to target shoot. She's gone out with a bullhorn to scare away drug dealers at some houses.

Once she and a fellow walker heard two gunshots around Emerson Avenue and Fulton Street. Seconds after they alerted police, five police cars were there. "Police were coming every which way. They don't lose time, they're right there for us," she said.

The incident was the only one she could recall in six years of volunteering.

She has had mud and "a dog mess" thrown across her house more than once, but said she just cannot live in fear.

"When I leave this earth, I will leave with the belief I helped where I could help," she said.

Making a difference

While such residents are making a difference, Crime Prevention Officer Patrick Plano noted, they need to work together.

"PAC-TAC is doing great things. Interfaith Action wants to help the community in their way. And they all work together. I use a baseball team as an analogy. You can't have 10 lead-off hitters. You have to have one or two guys who are good at the lead-off hit spot, who are real fast, that can run

fast. You've got to have a couple of guys who are good home run batters. ...

"PAC-TAC, with Interfaith Action, with Block to Block (a neighborhood watch group that meets at Sacred Heart Cathedral), with MNA (Maplewood Neighborhood Association), with Edgerton, the Police Department, the Neighborhood Empowerment Team, all of us together, working together, can resolve anything. And I wholesomely believe that, no doubt about it."

On duty July 16, he pointed out drug houses, closed drug houses, dealers and a prostitute in a ride through neighborhoods around Sacred Heart Cathedral, Holy Rosary and St. Anthony churches, and explained where residents are needed to help.

Groups are "saying they want officers," he noted. "I'm the guy here, I'm saying I'm ready to go."

He encourages people to call his pager number anytime — to report who's coming and going from a house, when, in what car, and so on. He also printed up an information form people can send in.

One resident, he said, "makes me look like the best officer in the section sometimes" because of the tips he provides.

At the same time, he said, people want instant gratification. But what it takes is perseverance, he said.

Piano knows the area — he was raised in Holy Rosary and St. Anthony churches, and was a youth group leader. He and his wife recently left their house on Electric Avenue for a home outside the city. Both had been threatened by major drug dealers, he said, who once surrounded his wife while she was in her car.

The home they left and now rent is valued at half of the \$80,000 they have in it, he said, so he understands frustrations of homeowners who can't sell and must rent out their places.

Still, he enjoys going back to the neighborhood for what he calls community policing, talking with people on the street and insisting all be treated with dignity. On July 16 with a rider along he stopped, for example, to talk with people at a Lexington Avenue house — where he called over a man who'd been arrested the day before for drug dealing. He asked how the man and a loved one were doing.

Later he stopped for four children who peered into the car, wanting to know where Piano's gun was.

They never did get to see his gun. He told them his best weapons were his mouth and his head, not his gun.

Piano is known for his zero tolerance, writing out tickets for cars parked illegally on neighborhood streets, and even citing one resident for littering when the resident became upset and dropped garbage on his lawn while ranting at the officer.

"You can't let things go," he said to a woman critical of his approach at the June 22 public meeting at Holy Rosary.

On duty, he commented, "I ask myself every day when I come in, if I die today am I going to heaven. I know the answer is yes."

Beyond broken windows

Some priests around the diocese tolerate occasional vandalism to church property better than crime in their parishes. A few, though, have installed closed-circuit monitors in churches and hired security guards for their parking lots.

Father Robert Werth, pastor of the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward, said he's more concerned that the church reach out in the neighborhood, "becoming one with the neighborhood" than with a broken window or a stolen microwave from the rectory.

Interfaith Action is a concrete link, he said, as are community and business associations. He added, "And the church has the power to effect change, to mobilize forces and get out a consistent message."

People need to continually ask if Interfaith Action is "being the kind of church we want it to be in the community," cautioned Brian Kane, organizer for the federation.

"So far the answer is clearly yes," he said. "We're doing what we set out to do."

The Monthly Prayer Request For Priests

Will you pray for a priest each day?

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

O Jesus! Eternal Priest, Keep these Thy holy ones within the shelter of Thy Sacred Heart where none may harm them. Keep unstained their anointed hands which daily touch Thy Sacred Body.

Keep unsullied their lips purple with Thy Precious Blood.

Keep pure and unearthly their hearts sealed with the sublime marks of Thy glorious Priesthood. Bless their labors with abundant fruit; and may they to whom they have ministered be here below their joy and consolation, and in Heaven their everlasting crown. Amen.

Prayer Suggestions: Mass, Rosary, Fasting, Day Offering, Eucharistic Adoration, Offering Sufferings, Divine Mercy Chaplet

August, 1998

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Look for the September MPRP Calendar in the August 28th Courier.						Revs. Bishop Matthew H. Clark
2 Pope John Paul II	3 Inactive Priests	4 Frederick C. Betti, SJ	5 Terence K. Fleming	6 Edward Golden	7 John J. Nacca	8 Elmer W. Heindl
9 Francis Marino, S.M.	10 Vincent P. Panepinto	11 Richard J. Shatzel	12 Paul F. Walsh, CSB	13 Lawrence J. Wroblewski, SJ	14 Lawrence Searles, SJ	15 Edward B. Zenkel
16 John J. Quinn	17 Symon P. Ntaiyia	18 Daniel McMullin	19 William F. Laird	20 Frank E. Lioi	21 William B. Holberton	22 Albert J. Shamon
23 Martin Boler, OSB	24 Theodore J. Auble	25 Anthony F. Calimeri	26 John A. De Socio	27 William J. Cosgrove	28 Benedict A. Ehman	29 James T. Wolfe
30 Vocations	31 Seminarians					

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