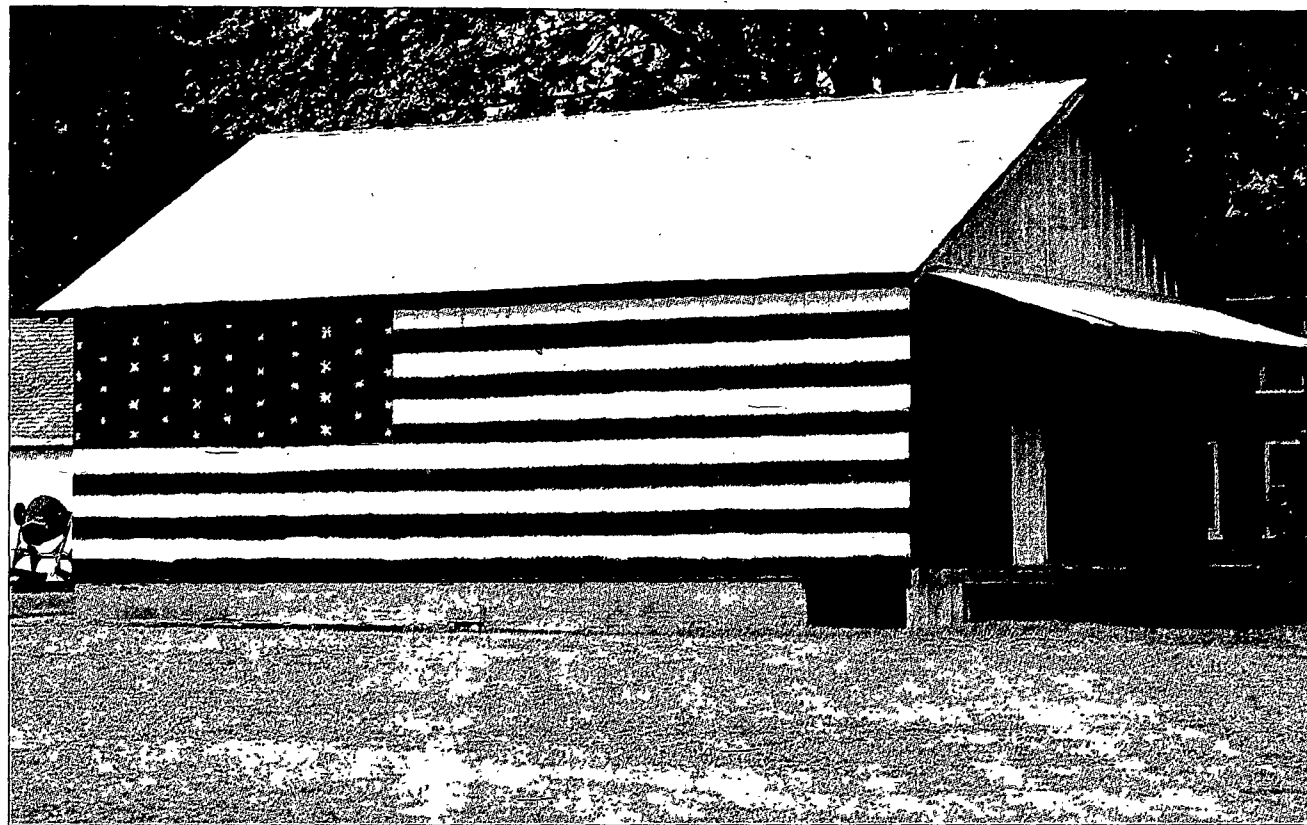


RECOGNIZING

Five Catholic elementary school students in Rochester have been selected as part of McQuaid Jesuit High School's Xavier Scholars program. The program provides six years' tuition, books, outfits and financial assistance to participate in school activities. The students, entering McQuaid's seventh grade next year, and their schools, are Aaron Ajegba, St. Andrew's; Peter Brett, Holy Rosary; Andrew Farley, St. Boniface; Michael Gill, Holy Rosary; and Angel Guadalupe, Corpus Christi at Blessed Sacrament. They attend schools that are provided with student financial assistance by Wegman's Inner City School Program, or WIN, established by Robert and Peggy Wegman of Wegman's Food Markets. The Xavier program is funded by the Gleason Foundation, the New York Province of the Society of Jesus and other sources. Finalists, recommended by their respective schools, are chosen for their academic and extracurricular achievement; ability to meet McQuaid's standards on an entrance exam; and interviews with McQuaid faculty members.



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

Memorial Day tribute

Students from St. Mary's School in Waterloo volunteered to paint the American flag on the side of a barn located on Chestnut Street in Waterloo. A crew from the CBS show "Sunday Morning" filmed the students as they worked on the barn, and the segment aired May 25.

Activists will fight trespass charges

War protesters to face trials, hearings this fall

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

ROCHESTER — Twelve of the 13 protesters — mostly Catholic peace activists — charged with criminal trespass for refusing to leave the Federal Building on Ash Wednesday, March 5, are appearing in court throughout May, June, September and October.

The protesters were arrested after participating in a service protesting the then-imminent invasion of Iraq. If convicted, they could be sentenced to up to six months in jail.

In April, protesters Sarah Brownell, a staff member at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, a city shelter, pleaded guilty to the reduced charge of a violation and was sentenced to pay fines and court fees totaling \$160.

On Oct. 16, two protesters who are legally representing themselves — Dr. Harry Murray, a Catholic Worker and professor at Nazareth College, and Jan Bezila,

coordinator of the Catholic peace group Pax Christi Rochester — are slated for a bench, or no-jury, trial on the charges facing them. Murray and Bezila appeared in city court on May 20 before Judge Ann Pfeiffer, and both defendants brought motions asking that the charges be dismissed.

Bezila argued at her appearance that when she protested at the Federal Building, she was simply exercising her constitutional right to practice her religious belief that Christians are called to follow the nonviolent example of Jesus, which precludes participation in war.

"In freedom to practice my religion, I am called to pray, to speak up, and to act in opposition to all violence," she said after her appearance. She added that it was most appropriate for her to be at the Federal Building on Ash Wednesday because it is the beginning of Lent, a season of repentance.

In a written motion submitted prior to his court appearance, Murray argued that the U.S. government had no right to enforce trespass laws since it had committed the same offense by invading Iraq.

Additionally, Murray maintained that President George W. Bush's administration was curtailing civil liberties in various ways, compelling Americans to protest its actions.

"Al-Qaeda can kill our bodies, but the Bush administration can kill the spirit of democracy in this country," Murray said.

Judge Pfeiffer noted that Murray's arguments were not relevant to the charge against him, adding that he had not been charged under the anti-terrorist Patriot Act. She said he and Bezila could more properly present their arguments at hearing that will be incorporated into their trial, where the prosecution also could make its case. Both defendants then opted for a bench trial before the judge.

Donald M. Thompson, an attorney representing St. Joseph's staff member Jessica Chapman and Pittsford resident Gail Mott, plans to argue for dismissal at a hearing slated for Sept. 3. He contends that the protesters were not actually committing criminal trespass since none of them blocked the Federal Building's entranceway during the protest, and that they had not actu-

ally passed through the metal detectors in the building's foyer. Their protest, Thompson said, took place in an area open to the public, no different than the sidewalk outside the Federal Building.

"What they did is not against the law," Thompson said in an interview outside the courtroom. "The only reason they were (arrested) is that someone was afraid they were not going to toe the line in a government building."

In particular, he added, the prosecution had no case against Chapman because it has no evidence that she actually refused to leave the building.

"They didn't know if she was going to visit her congressman or buy stamps," he said.

If the judge throws out the criminal trespass charges against Mott and Chapman, he said, it could bode well for the other 10 defendants.

"If we get any relief in our favor, all the other people have to do is stand up and say, 'Me, too,'" he said, noting the judge could dismiss charges against the others if the prosecution's case against Mott and Chapman is found "defective."