

Draft resister faces charge as part of crusade for change

By Carmina Brooks
special writer

Who is Dan Rutt?
Dan Rutt is Michigan's first young man to be indicted by a federal grand jury for refusing to register for the draft under the current draft legislation.

Dan Rutt, 21, is a senior biology major at Hope College in Holland.

An overflow crowd of mostly middle-aged and older people attended a benefit performance at the Northwest Unitarian-Universalist Church in Southfield Sunday night to hear music and songs by Phil Marcus Esser and to meet Dan Rutt.

Invited of refusing to register for the draft, Rutt faces up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

With his parents, Lois and Wilbur Rutt of Dearborn listening, and his younger brother and sister in the audience, Rutt told his supporters that the United States government would never get his "will to kill." This is how he interprets registering for selective service as now required by law.

"I AM NOT TRYING to belittle the government. I am trying to show them

what I think is right. They have my records and my fingerprints. Do they need my will?" Rutt asked. "If that is what they require, they are not going to get it."

"I don't see that my life can be justified by taking another under any circumstances. The military, somewhere down the line, assumes it is going to be acceptable to take another person's life, by finding people who condone this," Rutt said.

"I think the registration act is violent and un-Christian. I see myself as a Christian, not as a sacrifice or martyr. Somebody has got to stand up and say no. It is as simple as that."

Rutt is a Methodist. His parents were raised as Methodists in Iowa and Pennsylvania. Methodists are a Christian denomination opposed to infant baptism, the taking of oaths, the holding of public office, and military service.

RUTT'S DECISION to resist registering for the draft is a religious and moral commitment, rather than a political or intellectual one, he said.

The current registration law is unjust — a "message to Moscow that our young men are willing to fight," he said. Rutt said he does not oppose a vol-

untary system.

The benefit performance featuring local artist Phil Marcus Esser, guitarist and singer, was sponsored to show support for Rutt by the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan, Draft Resisters Defense Committee, Social Action Committee of the First Unitarian-Universalist Church, and the Social Responsibility Committee of the Northwest Unitarian-Universalist Church.

Howard Simon of the ACLU said it is important that artists like Esser lend their talents to causes like Dan Rutt's. The event was to show there is a community behind Rutt who believe it is not right to convict and sentence a person who has the courage to defy an unjust law, Simon said.

"One person who has had the courage to stand up for his convictions, has from time to time helped change the future," Simon said.

Rutt will be defended by a team of four attorneys, James Lafferty of Birmingham, Dennis James and David Kripps of Detroit, and Robert Glennon, a professor of law at Wayne State University.

Lafferty, who is an ACLU attorney, said Rutt was the 14th person singled out for prosecution because he "has a rich political history of being outspoken on the resistance to the draft."

IT BEGAN 13 months ago when Rutt started writing letters to elected representatives including U.S. Senator Carl Levin and President Ronald Reagan, making speeches, appearing on radio programs and in the newspapers.

"Pick off the leadership, the most outspoken, and you can silence the whole group," Lafferty said.

Lafferty said nearly a million young men have failed to register for the draft. Another million have not turned in second or third addresses and are in technical violation of the registration law, he added.

"What the government could not do through a political campaign — they could not convince young people of this country to register — the rate of resistance continued to grow, so they started including people," Lafferty said.

"With all the missiles, a draft is not needed to defend the nation. A draft is only needed to fight another Vietnam or El Salvador."

Dan Rutt is the catalyst that has brought together individuals and organizations to form the Draft Resisters Defense Committee. Committee Chairman Robert Walton said more than 50 persons and 23 organizations have joined the committee.

No legal fees will be charged to defend Dan Rutt in federal courts, but money is needed for the cost of preparing legal briefs, for thousands of pages of transcripts and pleadings and government documents. Several law students will coordinate the paper work on the case, Lafferty said.

Donations to the American Civil Liberties Union Fund of Michigan Inc., the Dan Rutt case, are tax deductible. The case is at pretrial stage with a trial date tentatively in April, Lafferty said.

Dan Rutt said, "Love thy enemy and pray for those who prosecute you."

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Accident victim dies

An Orchard Lake St. Mary's staff member died early Tuesday from injuries suffered in a car accident Jan. 24 on Old Orchard Trail.

Krystyna Brzek, 34, died in William Beaumont Hospital more than a month after the car in which she was a passenger rolled over and caught fire. The accident occurred about 2:45 a.m. Jan. 24 on Old Orchard Trail in Orchard Lake.

Brzek suffered second- and third-degree burns over her body and face in the accident.

She was recovering from the burns when she developed pneumonia, from which she died, the Rev. Larry Hoppe said. She was wearing for Hoppe at the seminary, where she was an offset machine operator.

THE ACCIDENT occurred when the

driver of the car Brzek was a passenger in, Derek McDermott, 21, of Warren, allegedly took his eyes off the road to aid Brzek in getting something out of the glove compartment, Orchard Lake Police Chief Nicholson said.

The car, traveling south, apparently sideswiped two trees, then rolled over in the middle of the road. A can of gasoline in the back seat, capped only by a piece of plastic wrap, spilled out and apparently was ignited by hot ashes in the car ash tray, police said.

McDermott, who allegedly escaped the car first, was treated and released at the hospital.

Both had their clothes burned off them. "She was wearing a lot of polyester," Nicholson said.

McDermott told police he carried the spare gasoline in case he ran out of gas on trips to northern Michigan.

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