

# Clashing averted at Hills abortion rally

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"IT'S A conscience thing. We don't try to tell people what to do. We're just trying to be peaceful," Hoy said.

He said the rally was not sponsored by a specific group, but a variety of individuals, including Catholic priests and evangelical Christians, although he said it was "not strictly a Christian thing."

Organized by the Pro-Life Action Network, a national coalition of anti-abortion groups, Saturday's "National Day of Rescue" drew national leaders supporting protests on both sides of the abortion issue. Protests were held in Farmington Hills, Livonia and Sterling Heights; they followed a two-day convention of these groups held in Livonia on Thursday and Friday.

Forty-two officers from Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield and the Oakland County Sheriff's Department kept the two groups apart and monitored the situation.

THE MORNING protest was peaceful, with no confrontations or arrests at the scene, although Farmington Hills police chief William Dwyer said officers were prepared to handle any problems. He attributed the protest's peaceful atmosphere to the officers on the scene.

"It could have become very nasty," Dwyer said. "There's very few cities who don't have some kind of altercation or arrests. It speaks well of the police departments involved."

Several residents were escorted into the building for dental and other appointments with other businesses located there.

A national pro-life leader, Joseph Scheidler, director of the Chicago-based Pro-Life Action League, said he has worked for banning abortion since the early 1970s. He said he would have preferred to see more activity at Saturday's rally in Farmington Hills.

"I would have (advocated) a lot of confronting," he said. "We're a little more blatant. We used to do this with 12 people years ago. I don't know where they're coming from, but I'm happy."

The protest drew out some neighbors of the area, which borders of the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills. Longtime Farmington councilman Ralph Yoder said he had walked to the scene from his house, where he heard the early morning chanting.

BOTH DWYER and Farmington Hills police Inspector Richard Nicastro said police expected Saturday's activity and had prepared for it. "We had a pretty good idea there would be some demonstration this morning," he said.

When police arrived at 6:25 a.m., 200 protesters were already sitting at both entrances to the building. Other protesters were kept to the sidewalk area, as police cordoned off the area.

Dwyer said his department remained prepared for future problems at the clinic, should they occur. "We're always going to be prepared," he said. "We will always anticipate further demonstrations at the clinic."

Staff writer Bob Sklar contributed to this report.

## Abortion protest extends 16 years

By Casey Hana  
staff writer

A national anti-abortion leader said he became an activist more than one decade ago after seeing an aborted fetus, which reminded him of his son.

He now gets hauled off to jail regularly and promotes confrontations between pro-life and pro-choice forces at various demonstrations.

Joseph Scheidler took part in Saturday's demonstration in Farmington Hills, which he said was a bit too peaceful for his liking.

Director of the Chicago-based Pro-Life Action League, Scheidler said he had been actively protesting abortions since before the landmark 1973 U.S. Supreme Court de-

cision, *Roe vs. Wade*. He is an author and inner public relations consultant at one time studied to become a priest.

"There no doubt in my mind life starts conception," he said. In a 1979 brochure that pictured a bag of feces he called "basket babies," he identified with that bag of feces, he said. I was already fed up when January rolled around.

That was the month the Supreme Court decided the *Roe vs. Wade* case, forcing states from limiting abortion during the first three months of pregnancy.

Scheidler explained how pro-life forces were trying to shut down a clinic if it performs legal abortions.

He said he infiltrated the clinics by using appointments for members to pretend they are planning abortion. Once inside, they try to talk other women out of the procedure, he said.



Scheidler



Farmington attorney and pro-choice activist Irene Piccone asks a police officer why some anti-abortion protesters were allowed to stay near the Women Center. Police said only the protesters who were at the building when they

arrived were allowed to stay; others were forced to stay along the sidewalk. Looking on is Bob Hoy (left), a Troy resident and an organizer of Saturday's pro-life demonstration.

## Pro-choice marches for women's rights

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Many pro-choice representatives were angry they were restricted to the sidewalks as pro-life advocates were allowed near the clinic's entrances.

"THE FACT they got here first doesn't give them any more rights," Farmington attorney and NOW member Irene Piccone said, about the pro-life groups' closeness to the clinic's entrance.

Former Michigan NOW president and board member Marian McCracken of Farmington, agreed. "We have watched their (pro-life groups) operation all along. I'm outraged. If this was the McDonald's or the grocery store, the police would have gotten them out of here."

The pro-choice counter-protest was said to be a sign of things to come as the movement beefs up its attempts to regain the offensive against the anti-abortion movement.

"Over the last year, we've been watching Operation Bully, and we haven't been out because we were respecting the wishes of reproductive services providers," Yard said.

When several-hundred-thousand pro-choice advocates converged on Washington April 9, it signaled the

movement attempts to regain the offensive against the anti-abortion movement.

"It's a women's health issue for the right women to control their reproductive life," Yard said.

The city, damp Saturday morning air didn't dampen counter-protest message in Farmington Hills: "Right to Life, your name is a lie. You of care, women die," and "Not the high. Not the state. Women must decide their fate."

FARMINGTON ATTORNEY Piccone said her pro-life's movement is an attempt to keep women subservient. "They wouldn't allow a demonstration to keep men down. But it's okay to be a demonstration to keep women down," she said.

McCracken echoed similar sentiments. "We're the majority. We are here to make it clear this is a women's issue. Our next objective will be banning birth control," McCracken said.

Although a majority of counter-protesters were women — of all ages — men were doing their part, participating the chants and carrying the sign.

Holding a sign that proclaimed, "Husbands and Fathers, Pro Choice," Stan Gillette of Bloomfield Township, made his support clear.

"It's predominantly a women's issue. But it transcends into a family issue," he said.

Gillette described his personal experience in the early 1970s when his wife, carrying their youngest child, was exposed to rubella. Despite the fear and uncertainty of perhaps having a badly deformed child, Gillette and his wife were without a choice.

"Based on my personal experience, I personally believe all women should have a choice," Gillette said. Amid the pro-choice advocates' chants, talk also centered on the U.S. Supreme Court's return to the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* case that forbids states to interfere with abortion during the first three months of pregnancy.

YARD AND McCracken shook

their heads in disbelief as they discussed the court's reconsideration of the famous case. "Neither side will be happy," McCracken said.

Rattling off statistics and facts and the need for safe and legal abortions, Yard said the World Health Organization estimated that one woman dies every three minutes around the world from an illegal and unsafe abortion. "That's totally unnecessary."

Ninety-one percent of all abortions are performed in the sixth, eighth or 10th week of pregnancy "when there is no little baby in there," Yard said.

Calling the pro-life marchers hypocrites, Yard said more Catholic women have abortions than Jewish or Protestant women. And many of those who receive abortions are members of Evangelical religions.

"These people place no value on women's lives."



Marian McCracken of Farmington was among the pro-choice advocates Saturday in Farmington Hills.

## Protest proves peaceful

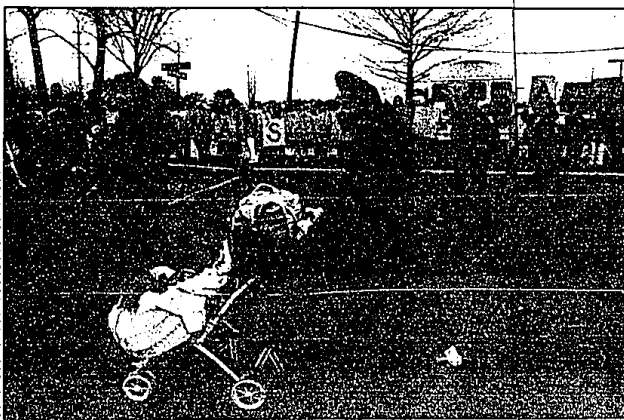
Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer said Saturday's abortion demonstration was "probably the most peaceful . . . in the nation," considering most protests end in arrests and other violence.

There were no arrests made at the 3 1/2-hour demonstration, held at the Women Center on Orchard Lake Road, south of 10 Mile. Although the protest was sponsored by pro-life ac-

tivists, a small group of pro-choice proponents demonstrated.

"We had told our people for this," Dwyer said. "We were more pro-active in our mode. They could not have had demonstration the way we had our others deployed."

Forty-two officers from the Hills, Farmington, Southfield and the Oakland County Sheriff's Department aided in the effort.



Evelyn (left) and her daughters — adopted 10-month-old Grace, and Brianna — joined pro-life picketers Saturday morning in Farmington Hills. Grace is the child of a rape victim.

## She marches for baby rights

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Evelyn would have still protested at the Women Center in Farmington Hills Saturday even if she hadn't been able to adopt 10-month-old Grace, the baby of a rape victim.

"I don't believe in killing or torturing babies. Just because it (abortion) is legal doesn't make it right," said Evelyn, who would not give her last name or home town.

The mother said so many couples

want babies that women confronted with unwanted pregnancy have options other than abortion.

"I don't feel it's a woman's issue. It's a human issue. If a woman's life is a human life, what is a baby? Aren't they human, too?" Evelyn said.

Evelyn adopted Grace after experiencing six miscarriages. She plans to adopt six children because she always intended to have six children.

As far as Evelyn is concerned, abortion is not an option, even for

pregnant teen victims of rape or incest. "If it's teenage girl, the decision to give a baby up is between her and her mother," Evelyn said.

She urged pro-families to open their homes to pregnant mothers who need help rather than allowing them to live in — many without money — and forced into an abortion by their individual circumstances.

"There's help out there for them. We're ready to help them," she said.

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