



Kurt Ellison

Santa Cruz County residents took part in this anti-abortion protest in Oakland last month.

## Abortion pro and con: passion on both sides

By CHELA ZABIN  
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Brenda Donahue recently spent 47 days in jail. She doesn't regret what she did, and she plans to do it again.

Ken Reed is doing what he can to make sure more people like Donahue end up in jail. Two weeks ago, he took a full-time job organizing civil disobedience protests like the one Donahue was in, in Monterey, Santa Cruz and Salinas.

Donahue and Reed are members of Operation Rescue, an organization that has made headlines in last few years for

its "rescues" at abortion clinics. Participants attempt to stop abortions by blocking clinic entrances while "sidewalk counselors" talk to women as they approach the clinic. Those blocking the doors are routinely arrested on trespassing and related charges.

A few weeks ago, Carol Fuller traveled over 3,000 miles to two cities just to protest for abortion rights.

Three Sundays ago, retiree Miriam Bradley hired a trolley car to carry a group of elderly protestors in a National Organization for Women march in

Washington.

Fuller has just stepped down from a six-year stint on the local Planned Parenthood board of directors. The recent abortion-rights marches in San Francisco and Washington weren't her first and aren't likely to be her last.

Bradley has been active with the Santa Cruz County branch of the National Organization for Women and with local feminist Anne Simonton's protests against beauty contests. She couldn't attend the recent NOW march in Washington because of failing health, so she hired the trolley car as a way of making her sentiments known.

Donahue, Fuller, Reed and Bradley are just a few of the many Santa Cruz residents who have been involved with the flurry of protests for and against abortion in the weeks leading up to the U.S. Supreme Court hearing on the issue. The hearing, which begins this week, focuses on a Missouri abortion law, and could lead to a reversal or partial reversal of the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision, which held that abortion in the first three months of pregnancy is legal.

Donahue, a Soquel resident, was arrested for blocking the entrance to Family Planning Alternatives in Sunnyvale Feb. 11. She remained in jail because, along with others who were arrested, she gave her name only as "Baby Jane Doe." Charges against her, the two other Baby Jane Does, and ten Baby John Does, were later dropped on a technicality. The Sunnyvale "rescue" was her third, the jail time her first.

"I sure would do it again," she said in a recent telephone interview, adding that her determination was bolstered by some of the women she met in jail, who regretted the abortions they had had and asked "Where was Operation Rescue when I had my abortion?"

Reed has been to about 13 "rescues" and has lost track of how often he's been arrested.

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Carol Fuller is strongly pro-choice.



VCF  
**ABORTION**

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He's just moved to Mt. Hermon and started a full-time job building up Operation Rescue's forces in Salinas, Santa Cruz and Monterey.

He said he doesn't know how much effect the organization's actions will have on the Supreme Court hearing, but, he said, the rescues have succeeded in bringing the issue to the public's attention. Most importantly, he said, the actions have helped "save children's lives," by preventing women from getting into the clinics. He said studies have shown that 20 percent of women who don't make their first appointment don't reschedule.

Donahue and Reed are relative newcomers to anti-abortion activism. Reed went to his first "rescue" last May and Donahue went to hers last summer. Both had been opposed to abortion for some time, but hadn't actively worked against it.

For Donahue, the turning point came after she did a research paper on abortion for an English class at Cabrillo College. She admits that some of the materials she used in her research, supplied by anti-abortion groups, were biased, but said she uncovered enough facts to convince herself that abortion is horribly cruel to the unborn child. When a friend told her about Operation Rescue, she thought it sounded like a good thing.

Still, she was a bit hesitant about going on her first "rescue" and about getting in legal trouble. Eventually, however, she became convinced it was not only OK, but morally necessary.

"I consider myself a law-abiding citizen," she said. "I don't really see this as being against the law... It's the law of God to rescue those who are being unjustly harmed."

Reed had similar hesitations when his friend Jeff White, who oversees the organization's Northern California operations, suggested he get involved.

"I had watched (coverage of the rescues) on CNN, and I saw what was going on there, and I thought he was crazy," he said.

At White's urging, Reed attended an Operation Rescue rally. "I thought it was great, but I was still apprehensive about the 'rescue' the next day," he said. "But my wife prodded me to go... and it was the best thing I'd ever experienced, getting together with my brothers and sisters in Christ on this issue."

Both Donahue and Reed are motivated in large part by their religious beliefs. Reed is a member of Grace Community Church in San Jose, which is, in his words, a "reformed" Protestant denomination. Donahue is a member of the Foursquare Church in Santa Cruz, which she describes as "a more mellow" charismatic church.

Like most members of Operation Rescue, Reed and Donahue believe life begins at conception and are opposed to the use of birth-control devices like IUDs that essentially abort fertilized ova. They are opposed to abortion - except in cases where both the

mother and the child are at grave risk - even in cases of incest or rape.

Donahue, who is unmarried and has never had an abortion, said she would have a child if she became pregnant, no matter what the circumstance. She said women aren't given complete information about what abortions are and how they can be emotionally harmed by them.

Of abortion-rights activists, she said, "They're calling it rights ... it's not a right to kill somebody else. What they are wanting to do is live their selfish lifestyles without paying for it at all."

Reed said he would expect his wife to have a child if she became pregnant through a rape. "That's not something I can say easily," he said, adding that he "would expect to" care for a child conceived that way.

He and his wife have four chil-

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*Brenda Donahue*

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dren and use the rhythm method of birth control. Reed has faith that if God wants him to have "seven or eight children ... he will provide."

Donahue doesn't believe that there aren't enough families to care for unwanted children. A couple in her church were on an adoption waiting list for years, and were willing to take a baby of any race, she said.

Fuller, a Santa Cruz resident who has owned Trader Tots, a used children's-clothing, toys and furniture store in Santa Cruz for 13 years, said she has seen the results of children growing up in homes where they were not wanted or not cared for. Before opening the store, she worked for Juvenile Hall in Santa Cruz and for a children's shelter in Santa Clara.

"Those are heart-wrenching cases... a good part of those kids are abused," she said. "All these people (anti-abortionists) who care so much about children, if they put half that energy into the children that are here and the teenagers ... we might make some impact on some of the social problems that we've got."

But the unwanted children aren't the only reason Fuller believes women should be able to have abortions. She thinks access to abortion is central to improving women's lives, because how many children a woman has affects her ability to get an education, pursue a career, and provide for herself and her family both financially and emotionally.

"By extension, it affects the well-being of the whole community," she said, noting that before abortion was legalized in this country, women continued to get illegal abortions, many at a risk to their health and their lives.

When asked whether abortion is murder, Fuller, who has no chil-

dren and has had an abortion, makes a distinction between the first two trimesters and the third trimester, when "you have a fetus that could conceivably survive outside the womb." At this point, she feels the state has a legitimate interest in whether an abortion happens. Almost all abortions are done in the first and second trimesters, she said, when the fetus is small and unformed. She doesn't consider that aborting during that time is killing a human being.

Bradley, an Aptos resident, isn't sure whether abortion is or isn't murder, but she considers the question is "a secondary issue." She firmly believes an abortion is a woman's right, and she resents attempts to curtail that right.

"As an individual, regardless of whether it's abortion or driving a car, I would like to make my own decision and be responsible for it.

wasn't until she met Anne Simonton that she starting marching in the streets herself.

"Henry and I went to the Miss California contest one year at the Civic Auditorium, and we stood outside and watched all the crazy costumes (the protesters were wearing), and I thought what are those people doing that silly stuff for?" she said.

Bradley took some literature home and read it and ended up getting involved with Simonton's group, Media Watch. In 1987, she was featured on a poster protesting the march, with the slogan "Beauty is Ageless."

For the most part, Bradley takes a "live and let live" attitude toward anti-abortionists. "They have a right to their own opinions. I would oppose an anti-abortionist, but I wouldn't criticize her," she said, adding that she doesn't like the fact that they make impressionable young women feel guilty for getting abortions.

Fuller has been politically active since the '60s. When "the women's movement came up it spoke to a lot of us about a lot of levels where women aren't given equal partnership ... and for me the core of it is reproductive rights," she said.

She joined NOW and became active with Planned Parenthood, which she sees as the "leading advocacy agency for reproductive rights" and as an important supplier of medical services for women.

Fuller discredits organizations like Operation Rescue, saying they are small, fanatical groups that don't represent how most people feel about abortion. She also thinks the organizations are being supported by conservative political groups, who see the abortion issue as a way to gain political power.

"I think that they really have a much larger agenda than anti-abortion," she said. "You'd think if they were so interested in preventing abortion they would want to prevent unwanted pregnancies, but they don't. They're opposed to sex education in schools ... they're opposed to funding that would educate people about birth control services and availability ... I think that the anti-abortion posture is only the first step in 'putting women back in their place.'"