

# 'Pro-Life' Group Sees Abortion As An Immoral Act

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the second of a three-part series on abortion. The first appeared in Sunday's Sentinel; the final article will be in Tuesday's edition.

By MARK LAWSHE  
Sentinel Staff Writer

To some people, abortion is a fact of life, the way death and taxes are. To others, it is tantamount to murder.

One of those in the latter category is Dr. William P. Levonian, a Santa Cruz general practitioner for 19 years. For him and for many medical doc-

tors, there is no gray area: abortion is morally wrong when done for reasons other than medical necessity.

Under the U.S. Supreme Court decision of January 1973 "abortion on demand" must be made available to women in the first trimester. This is the first 12 weeks of pregnancy measured from the beginning of the last menstrual cycle.

"Just because it is legal doesn't make it morally acceptable," Levonian said. He compares the legality to the right of the German regime under Hitler to exterminate Jews.

When does life begin? This is one key to the controversy.

Levonian is convinced life begins at the time of implantation of the fertilized egg in the uterus. Because the new baby's cells have a unique genetic structure, the growing organism called a fetus is not "part" of its mother's body, he argues. It is a separate individual and thus entitled to protection of the law.

Thus early abortion may be considered justifiable homicide under the court ruling.

Many of Levonian's views parallel those in the "Handbook on Abortion" by Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke (1972), which is available in the local public library.

The new abortion laws represent a "total rejection of one of the core values of Western man," the Willkes write. This question—the sanctity of human life—was not addressed in the landmark 1973 decision.

The fetus' heartbeat begins between the 18th and 25th day; its brain is completely present by eight weeks; all organ systems, including breathing (though of fluid), function by 11 weeks.

When does life begin?

Levonian addressed the problem of the "unwanted" baby. First he pointed out there is a scarcity of babies available for adoption. But the question quickly returns to a basic dilemma: which is paramount, the right of a fetus to live or the right of a woman to control the life within her body?

"I find it impossible to equate a few months of nuisance for the mother with a 70-year lifetime of the new individual," Levonian said.

Will legalized abortion "on demand" end the back-room tragedies of criminal abortion?

"It won't," Levonian said. He cited the same reasoning as the Willkes, that many people fear disclosure, someone finding out (such as a jealous husband).

U.S. Public Health Department figures show a decline in abortion-caused maternal deaths from 1,232 in 1942 to 130 in 1968. The British Medical Journal reported in 1970 that "legalization of abortion has not so far materially reduced the numbers of spontaneous abortions or of deaths from abortions of all kinds."

The anti-abortion people

statistical relevance.

For abortion to be used as a "failsafe" to contraception, Levonian said, is a dangerous practice: where available on demand, he contends, it becomes used as a primary means of birth control.

The pro-life faction believes population control is achieved by raising standards of living,

which lowers the birth rate. The present California statutes, they say, are schizophrenic, speak vaguely of "mental health" justifications and fail to address the real population problem.

In California hospital abortions carried out in 1970, totalling 62,672 pregnancy terminations, 98.2 per cent were

done for the reason of "mental health." This figure is from the state Department of Public Health.

"If these abortionists are really humanitarian," Levonian asks, "why do they charge so much?" He said the operation isn't much harder than a \$35 IUD insertion.

Abortion costs in this area

range from \$135 to \$300, according to local sources.

Not only are the operations expensive, he said, they are also less safe than proponents would have the public believe.

Levonian cited high complication rates in a British study of suction abortion: a 50 per cent increase in subsequent infant mortality (future births)

and a 40 per cent rise in premature births. He said a German study showed 31.8 per cent complications of different types following the suction operation.

The last article in this series will explore modern abortion techniques as practiced by Dr. Richard J. Scotti, one of the few abortionists in the area.

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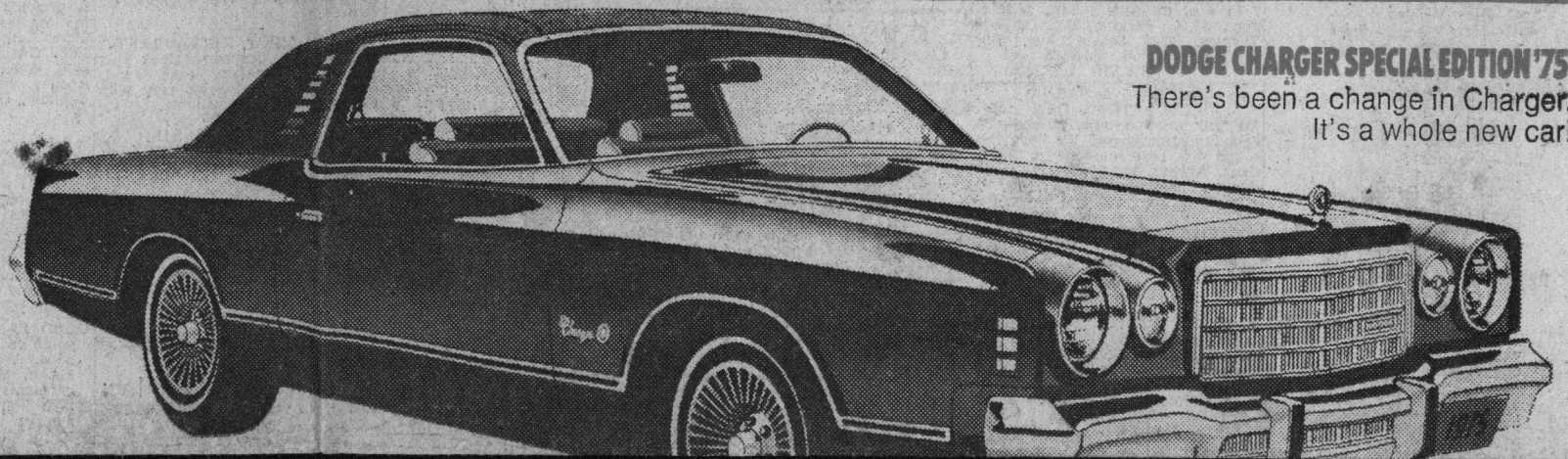


### Workshop On Emphysema


The Santa Cruz County branch of the Mission Coast Lung registered nurse who teaches at Cabrillo College, demonstrate

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## Workshop On Emphysema

The Santa Cruz County branch of the Mission Coast Lung Assn. will be sponsoring a free educational workshop for people with emphysema and their spouses beginning Thursday and continuing for four weeks. In the picture above, Margaret Whaley, left, a registered nurse at Dominican Hospital, and Joan Mitchell, a

registered nurse who teaches at Cabrillo College, demonstrate one of the machines which will be shown during the workshop. The four, two - hour sessions will be held in Room 309 of the Language and Arts building at Cabrillo from 2 to 4 p.m. or information, contact Olivia Meredith at the Lung Association office at 688 - 9249 as soon as possible.

## State Forecast

**LOS ANGELES**—Night and morning fog and low clouds with hazy afternoon sunshine Tuesday. Little temperature change. Highs in mid to upper 70s. Lows tonight in mid 60s.

**COASTAL AND INTERMEDIATE VALLEYS**—Some patchy fog increasing Tuesday morning otherwise variable high clouds with hazy sunshine Tuesday. A little cooler Tuesday. Highs Tuesday in 80s. Lows tonight 55 to 65.

**MOUNTAIN AREAS**—Variable high clouds but mostly sunny Tuesday. Little temperature change. Highs in 70s. Lows tonight in 40s and 50s.

**INTERIOR AND DESERT REGIONS**—Variable high clouds but mostly sunny Tuesday.

**SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY**—Fair through Tuesday. Slightly cooler days. Highs in upper 70s to upper 80s Tuesday. Lows in low and mid 50s except upper 50s south end. Light winds.

**NORTHERN AND CENTRAL CALIFORNIA**—Mostly fair with patchy morning low clouds or fog along the coast. Variable cloudiness north tonight and Tuesday. A little cooler.

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**—Night and morning fog and low clouds coastal sections, otherwise variable high clouds but mostly sunny Tuesday. A little cooler inland coastal valleys Tuesday, otherwise little temperature change.

deaths from 1,232 in 1942 to 130 in 1968. The British Medical Journal reported in 1970 that "legalization of abortion has not so far materially reduced the numbers of spontaneous abortions or of deaths from abortions of all kinds."

The anti-abortion people prefer to call their movement 'pro-life'. They criticize state laws which say abortion is legal until the baby is "viable", or capable of independent existence.

By these criteria, it is argued, a senile person rendered incompetent by a stroke is not "viable". Similarly, the completely psychotic person or the quadraplegic veteran from Vietnam are not capable of independent existence. Nor is a newborn baby.

"The fetus is alive, human, complete, and needs only time and nourishment to mature," Levonian said. "He or she should not be killed for sociological or economic reasons."

Levonian argues abortion is not a type of contraception in that it occurs after implantation. And, he says, the "what about rape" argument has little



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