

# Right to Life of Shelby County

# Newsletter

January 2010

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Volume 37 Issue 1

Building a Culture of Life in Shelby County, Ohio, since 1974

## Volunteer corner

- RTL will hold a membership meeting March 12, 2010. If you would like to help organize this event, please contact Jenni Bohman at 526-3451.

## Mark your calendar...

- Deadline for submissions to the February newsletter: January 22.
- Board meetings: January 5 and February 2, 7 pm.

## Pro-Life oratory contest

The 2010 Shelby County Pro-Life Oratory Contest for high school juniors and seniors will be held Thursday, February 25, at 6:30 pm. Prizes for 1st - 3rd place are \$300, \$150 and \$100 respectively. Winner will continue to state contest, and possibly to the national contest. See [www.nrlc.org/oratory/index.html](http://www.nrlc.org/oratory/index.html) for rules. Contact Anne Schmiesing at 937-492-5584 with questions or to register. Watch for more details in the February newsletter.

## Clothing center report

We served 152 people during the month of November, of whom 53 received free items, 2 took literature, and 1 was referred to the Women's Center.

## On the Web...

RTL of Shelby County:  
[www.shelbycountyrctl.org](http://www.shelbycountyrctl.org)

Ohio RTL:  
[www.ohiolife.org](http://www.ohiolife.org)

National RTL Committee:  
[www.nrlc.org](http://www.nrlc.org)

## Stand Up for Life: Vigil, March Coming Soon

January 22, 2010 marks the 37th anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision. Right to Life will hold its annual Candlelight Vigil at 7pm on Thursday, January 21, on the court square in Sidney.

**ACTION ITEM**



Yes, it will be cold. But abortion cannot be ended without conversion, and conversion won't happen without prayer and sacrifice. Please join us for this event.

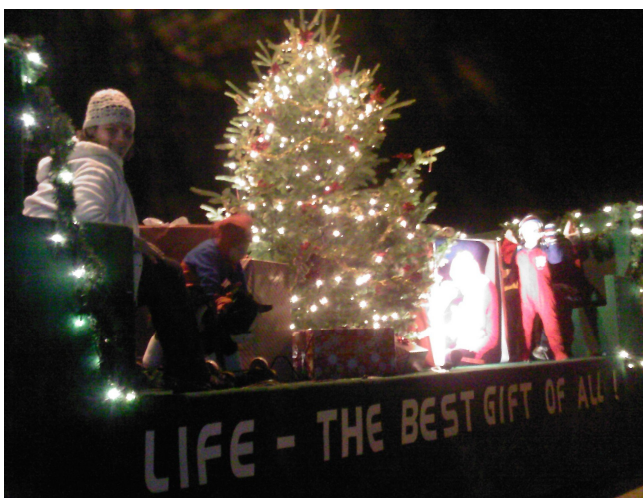


Please bring wind-protected or electric candles, and park across the street from the courthouse.

Immediately following the vigil, travelers will depart for the bus trip to Washington for the March for Life. The cost is \$70 per person, which includes bus fare and a subway ticket. Marchers travel through the night Thursday, attend the Youth Mass and rally at the Verizon Center Friday morning, participate in the March for Life on the Mall in the afternoon, and then return to Sidney early in the morning of Saturday, January 23.

If you are interested in going on the bus trip, please contact Bonnie York at 526-4388 or [dbyork@embarqmail.com](mailto:dbyork@embarqmail.com) immediately.

There is also a bus leaving from Wapakoneta. Its itinerary includes staying overnight on the 22nd and cost is \$105. Anyone interested in that bus may contact Holly DeHaven or Wendy Gerstner at 419-738-2115.



## 2009 Parade Season Closes with Winter Wonderland

Right to Life participated in its final parade of 2009, promoting a life-giving message at the Sidney Winter Wonderland parade in November.

Thank you to Sara Stueve and all the volunteers who assisted with the float this year. If you are willing to

help with this important outreach next year, please be sure to mark the float volunteer box on your membership letter, coming in January.

## Man Awakes from Coma, Highlights Need for Respect for Disabled

After he was the victim of an automobile accident, doctors said 23-year-old Rom Houben was in a comatose state and unable to communicate with those around him. Now, 23 years later, the 46-year-old says he felt trapped as he was conscious the entire time and attempted to communicate.

Houben became paralyzed after the crash but, thanks to advances in medical technology, he is now able to tell the world his thoughts via computer. "I screamed, but there was nothing to hear," he told the London Daily Mail newspaper.

"I dreamed myself away," he said of how he coped with the situation. "All that time I just literally dreamed of a better life. Frustration is too small a word to describe what I felt."

Although tests at the time showed that he was essentially "extinct," newer tests conducted just three years ago showed Houben's brain was functioning normally -- and his renewed ability to communicate is something he describes as a "second birth."

"I shall never forget the day when they discovered what was truly wrong with me - it was my second birth," he told the paper. "I want to read, talk with my friends via the computer and enjoy my life now that people know I am not dead."

British neurological expert Dr. Steven Laureys has described Houben's case in a new paper and said, "Medical advances caught up with him."

The paper indicates doctors used the internationally accepted Glasgow Coma Scale to assess his eye, verbal and motor responses, but the results were incorrect.

Laureys says physicians need to not be so quick to label patients as in a vegetative state, because such a diagnosis can be incorrect. "Anyone who bears the stamp of 'unconscious' just one time hardly ever gets rid of it again," he said.

American bioethicist Wesley J. Smith commented today on the case and said it has significant implications for the euthanasia and assisted suicide debate.

"We hear constantly that people diagnosed as being persistently unconscious should be dehydrated to death because they are not 'persons,' or are actually 'dead' -- and so should be available for organ harvesting," he said.

"We hear that even if the family resists, futile care theory should permit bioethics committees to impose unilateral withdrawal. And we hear this even as repeated studies demonstrate that 40 or more percent of patients diagnosed as PVS really aren't," he continued.

Smith says "there are abundant reasons to treat people with profound cognitive disabilities as fully human beings."

"First and foremost, because they are us. Second, because we don't know enough about how the brain works to know that there won't be some regeneration to permit eventual restoration of some function. But also, because there is always hope," he said.

"Houben is here today only because he wasn't dehydrated to death," Smith concludes.

"There is no doubt he went through a horrendous experience, but thanks to treating him as a fully equal human being by caring for him all those years and giving him tests late into his disability--explicitly refused to Terri Schiavo--he is here today to tell tale and live the rest of his life," he said.

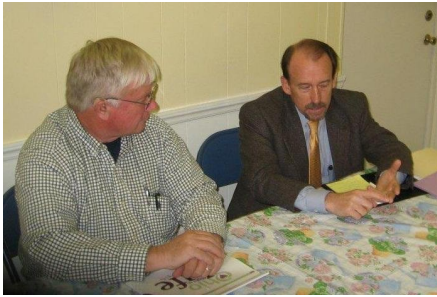
By Steven Ertelt. Reprinted with permission from LifeNews.com, November 23, 2009. Edited for space.

In memory of Sarah Owen, in whose name a memorial donation was made.

+May she rest in peace.+

## Ohio Right to Life Update

Shelby County RTL president Ron Meyer and director Kevin Schmiesing recently met with Jim Schroeder, development director of Ohio Right to Life, at our office in Sidney. Jim updated RTL on projects and news of interest from the state organization. Highlights include:



- Ohio Cultural Index: Polling of Ohioans on their views of various issues, including abortion. Findings available at [www.ohiolife.org](http://www.ohiolife.org) (see “News Room” and “Polls and Reports.”)

- [www.knowledgeisempowering.com](http://www.knowledgeisempowering.com). Information geared toward women in troubled pregnancies; one of the top sites for internet searches for “abortion.”

- Preparation for 2010 elections. Reapportionment and redistricting after the 2010 census means that it is critical that pro-life officials hold state offices.

- Life Solidarity Pastors conference: Outreach to Ohio clergy. To be held in Xenia in April.

## Senate Bill Biggest Expansion of Gov’t Abortion Funding Since Roe

With the Senate having defeated an amendment that would have removed the massive abortion funding from the government-run health care bill, pro-life groups now say the legislation would result in the biggest expansion of taxpayer-funding of abortions since Roe v. Wade.

After Roe, during the 1970s and before the Hyde amendment was exacted, the federal government paid for as many as 300,000 abortions annually -- and abortion numbers sharply declined once that funding was revoked.

With the Nelson amendment’s defeat, pro-life groups say the nation would go back to those days and they say they will pull out all the stops to get the Senate to defeat the bill.

National Right to Life legislative director Douglas Johnson said the battle is far from over and hopes the pro-life Democrats who supported the Stupak amendment in the House will stand up for it by voting against the health care bill should it be removed in conference committee.

Both amendments would prevent the federal government insurance program (the “public option”) from paying for abortion. In addition, both amendments would prevent federal subsidies from being used to purchase private health plans that cover elective abortion, but would not restrict the sale or purchase of such policies with private funds.

**Abortion is  
Not  
Health Care!**

Charmaine Yoest , the president of Americans United for Life Action, told LifeNews.com, “The Senate had the opportunity to follow the House’s lead in ensuring that federal dollars are not used to pay for abortions. Instead, the Senate chose to reject the Nelson-Hatch-Casey amendment and continue down the road towards unprecedented federal funding of abortion.”

And Jay Sekulow of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) told LifeNews.com that the vote is “a callous disregard for the protection of innocent human life” that ignores “the concerns of the American people. It is clear most Americans do not want abortion classified as a mandatory health care benefit. The House understood this in passing the Stupak-Pitts Amendment,” he said. “Sadly, the Senate chose to ignore the concerns of the American people and refused to approve an Amendment that would have put into place much-needed pro-life protections in the Senate's version of health care reform.”

By Steven Ertelt. Reprinted with permission from LifeNews.com, December 8, 2009. Edited for space.

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## Thank you!

We are grateful to all of you for helping Right to Life through another challenging but successful year. Your annual membership letter will be in the mail soon. Please read it carefully and prayerfully consider how you might further assist us in our efforts to build a culture of life in our region and in our nation.



God's blessings on you and yours in the New Year.

## RTL Newsletter Goes Digital

Beginning with this January edition, the RTL newsletter is now available as a pdf file through e-mail. For those who wish to continue receiving the newsletter through the mail, there will be no change.

For those who are interested in receiving the e-newsletter, please e-mail us at [office@shelbycountyrctl.org](mailto:office@shelbycountyrctl.org) and indicate that. If you'd like to receive both print and electronic versions, that is fine, as there is no additional cost to us.

## Right to Life Membership Meeting

A membership meeting of Right to Life of Shelby County will be held March 12, 2010, at 7:00 pm at the Alpha Center in Sidney. Speakers will include Michael Gonidakis and Gillian Stechshulte of Ohio Right to Life. More details will be forthcoming.