

“Where Do These Kids Come From?”

By Dave Andrusko

Next month we will be sending out tens of thousands of additional copies of our Special January 22 Commemorative Issue. And that welcome news is because the theme of this important edition—“The Roe Generation: How Young People Are Changing America’s View of Abortion”—is striking a responsive chord.

Surprisingly often major changes go unnoticed. The tectonic plates are busy grinding away, shifting at the edges, but only those with the right “equipment” know about the impending earthquake.

That is why it is an huge advantage to giving talks in high schools, organizing oratory contests, creating separate organizations run by high school and college students, and witnessing the enormous number of young people at the March for Life and state rallies. You are never blindsided by the seismic changes taking place beneath the surface among younger Americans.

To appreciate the transformation, we have to remember that pro-abortionists have fed them the same bland diet of “choice” and “women’s rights” for nearly 34 years. But by the millions, they are no longer dining at NARAL’s table.

While this was common news to us, my guess is that when the New York Times ran its now rather famous article headlined “Surprise Mom, I’m Anti-Abortion” in its March 30, 2003, issue, it was a shocking revelation to most pro-abortionists.

One of the cities reporter Elizabeth Hayt went to was Red Wing, in my home state of Minnesota. She wrote about how many of the students had taken the “anti-abortion” side in presentations they had made for a class in persuasive speech.

“I was shocked that there were that many students who felt strong enough and confident enough to speak about being pro-life,” Nina Verin, a parent of another student in the class (whose oral argument was about war in Iraq), told Hayt. “The people I associate with in town are pro-choice, so I’m troubled—where do these kids come from?”

Is that priceless, or what? “Where do these kids come from?”

The real question is not where but why? They need a breath of fresh air. For too long they have gagged on polluted pro-abortion rhetoric. Increasingly, young women and men are simply saying “no” to abortion.

Collectively, we have chiseled away at what was the monolithic pro-abortion consensus in academia and the media. Even if that group think still prevailed, it’s now easy to circumvent.

Thanks in no small part to the explosion in alternative media, you can make the case for life accessible to anyone with a PC. And familiarity with information technology seems as if it is the birthright of every child in America.

Combine this with the perennial thirst of young people for personal authenticity and a chance to be part of something larger—and nobler—than themselves. The perfect outlet for both is involvement in the greatest Movement for social justice of our time.

In one of his most influential books, C.S. Lewis once wrote of change versus transformation. “It is the difference,” he said, “between paint, which is merely laid on the surface, and a dye or stain which soaks right through.”

When we first became involved, I suspect for many of us, our embrace of life may have been like a first coat of paint. We didn’t know enough, hadn’t been involved enough, hadn’t learned enough yet for it to be deeper.

But the longer we carry the banner, the more we are changed. As the knowledge of what abortion does to unborn children, their mothers, and our great nation deepens, we are transformed. As a consequence we become, as someone once described it, “Lifers for Life.”

Lacking the baggage many of us oldsters carry, young people are not only able to make that conscience-driven move to greater intensity faster, they are also more willing to reach out to their friends. There results a kind of multiplier effect where the original “investment”—convincing one young person to work on behalf of the unborn—pays off in the recruitment of additional pro-lifers who in turn bring in still more young men and women.

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Let me end with the conclusion of Elizabeth Hayt’s remarkable article.

In Red Wing, the certainty of the youthful opinions of the students reminded their speech-class teacher, Jillynne Raymond, of an earlier generation’s certainty—her own.

“Teenagers have strong opinions,” Ms. Raymond, 41, said. “It’s no different than the 70’s when I was a teenager, but the difference is that the majority of speeches then were pro-choice. I wanted the right to an abortion as a woman. The focus then was not having the government tell me what to do with my body.

“Today,” she said of her students, “the majority is pro-life.”