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Six Months Off . . .

. . . to Go to Jail

By MICHAEL GRODEN

Taking six months off with pay and no chance of being fired or even reprimanded is probably every working person's dream. The possibilities of what you could do in that time seem endless.

Enrolling in that class you've always promised yourself you'd take, fixing all household leaks, holes, cracks and tunny noises once and for all, or taking that leisurely trip across the country with time to really study the land could all come to pass.

One Rochesterian actually was given such an enviable opportunity, but he didn't make it to California or Florida or even a local state park. He went to jail.

From March 15-Sept. 15, 1977 John J. Hodgetts, in conjunction with the

Monroe County Sheriff's Office and the Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry (RIJM), participated in an experimental program aimed at helping inmates of the county jail.

Hodgetts was given a six month "Social Service Leave" from Xerox Corp. where he works as an area manager in Webster.

Hodgetts described his social service leave as being designed to "assist newly arraigned prisoners in securing basic human needs."

He said that inmates often want to contact home to reassure their families (or to be reassured themselves) or they would need to get in touch with their attorneys but didn't know how to go about it. Many prisoners requested help with drug problems or marital strife or wanted to talk with a

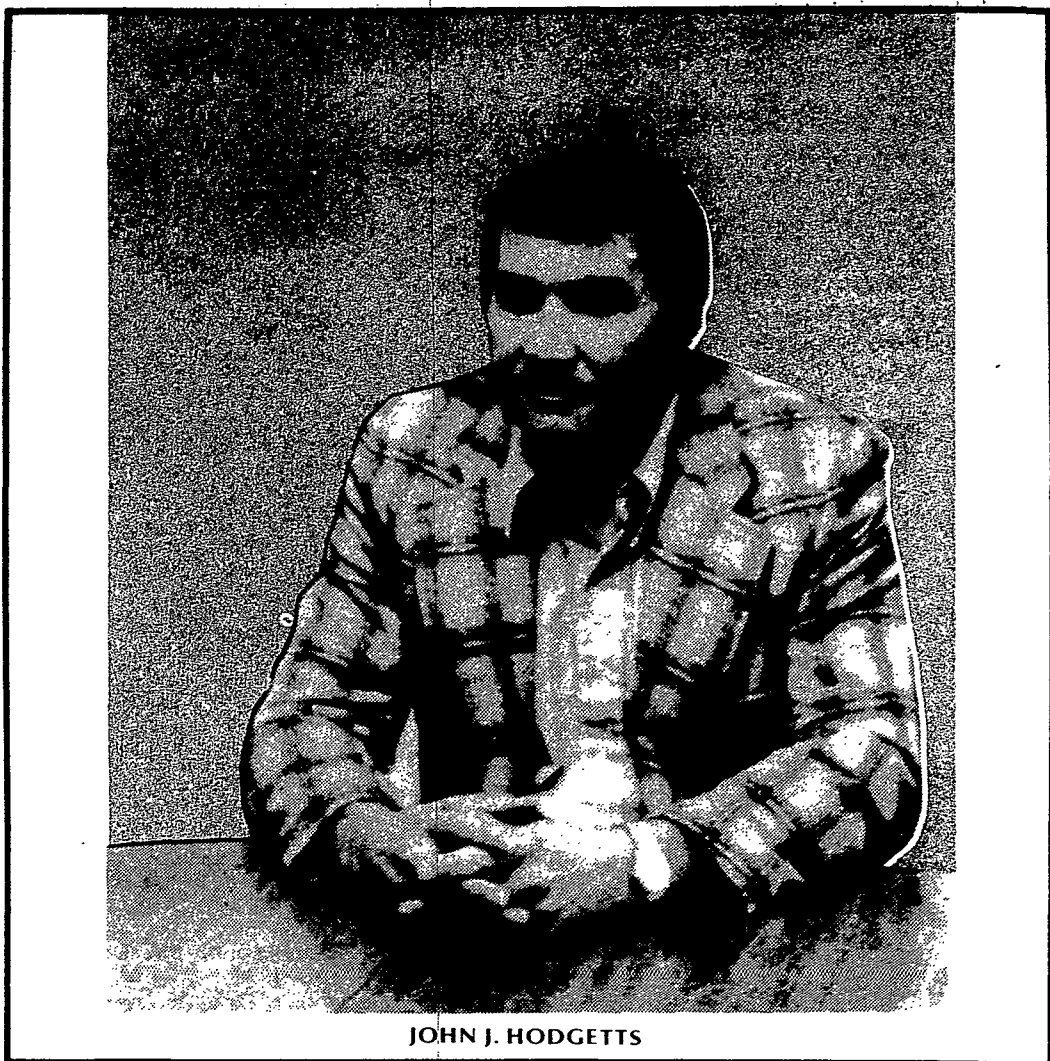
clergyman. My job was to make these contacts for them, he said.

Hodgetts also assisted prisoners in finding a place to stay or help them find work after their release. His labors were obviously productive.

During the six months he interviewed 961 newly arraigned prisoners which resulted in 1,460 referrals made on their behalf. The majority of those interviewed were between the ages of 16 and 21 years old, a fact which disturbed Hodgetts greatly.

Since completion of the pilot program five full-time employees have continued his work. One, sponsored by a federal grant, is employed by RIJM and four are employed through the Comprehensive Im-

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JOHN J. HODGETTS

St. Mary's . . . the Long, Complicated Struggle

By JOHN DASH

At press time this week, Sister DeChantal LaRow, administrator of St. Mary's Hospital, had not yet received word from the State Commissioner of the Department of Health on whether or not he had decided to order the closing of the hospital's obstetrical unit.

The tortuous path St. Mary's has had to chart through agencies and committees and sub-committees was broadly outlined last week by Sister DeChantal.

Back in 1973, problems of the low level of occupancy in many obstetrical and pediatric units across the State were a cause for concern not only to hospitals themselves, but

also to administrators of state agencies concerned with health delivery systems.

At that time there were in existence groups who had just begun working on the problem. At the top of that pyramid was the Commissioner of the State Department of Health, his advisory board, the Hospital Review and Planning Council, and a council committee specifically established to review the question. The committee is chaired, as it was then, by Dr. George T. Way and is generally identified by his name.

In December of that year, a request was issued by the state council to the Genesee Region Health Planning Council (GRHPC) to develop

a plan for the consolidation of obstetrical services and to submit that plan to the Way committee by April 1, 1974.

As studies got under way locally, that deadline was extended for a year.

Several years prior to this, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists had determined that for a metropolitan facility efficiently to serve a community it should have a minimum of 1500 births a year.

In 1974, The GRHPC commissioned the Monroe County Hospital Planning Group to study the entire question. By December of that year, it became evident that St. Mary's would become a target for closure. The hospital had then about 1200 births in its facility, and on Dec. 19, the hospital organized its own task force to study the problem.

Also during this time, studies were being made by groups independent of the GRHPC, namely the Medical Society of Monroe County and the Committee of Hospital Administrators.

By the end of 1974, the GRHPC announced that consolidation of obstetrical services would be its recommendation to the Way committee.

In January of 1975, at the request of Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, letters began pouring in to the GRHPC offices. The letters written by diocesans and others, urged continuance of the hospital's obstetrical facility.

When the April 1 deadline drew near the Monroe County Hospital Planning Group's committee, which

had been charged with the study, decided it needed at least another 30 days to make its report.

Then June 12 was the announced deadline. Then the deadline was extended another two months.

In August 1975 the committee's report was issued. Four members proposed that no local obstetrical unit should close, three recommended that St. Mary's unit close, four members recommended that Genesee Hospital should close its unit.

On Sept. 11, the Monroe County Health Council, as the county hospital planning group came to be known, voted that St. Mary's should close its obstetrical unit.

The vote, 14 for closing St. Mary's unit, 13 for closing Genesee's unit, and four abstentions drew heavy fire from throughout the community.

On Sept. 25 the GRHPC was expected to act on the health council vote.

On that date, the GRHPC voted to table the question, indefinitely.

Following that meeting, however, an OB (Obstetrical) Task Force was established to study the fiscal impact on an institution forced to close its obstetrical unit.

The report of that task force was submitted in February, 1977 to the Executive Committee of the Finger Lakes Health Systems

Agency, a new name for the GRHPC.

The report stated that closing St. Mary's unit would not seriously affect the hospital's finances.

Public hearings which ensued challenged that report and, in June, the executive committee of the FLHSA voted down a motion to close St. Mary's unit.

In the public jubilation which followed that vote, however, it also was noted that the committee vote represented a failure to meet the mandate given the committee by the state group.

And the question is now in the hands of the groups which asked it in the first place.

'Hug of Life' Aids St. Joseph's Visitor

Elmira—An unknown visitor to St. Joseph's Hospital's cafeteria Saturday, Sept. 24 may owe her life to one of the chefs there.

Merritt Wilson, who is a chef at St. Joseph's, was on his break in the cafeteria when the woman began to choke. She jumped up, but could not speak. Those who saw her said she began to turn blue. Wilson had never seen the film "Hug of Life," but knew the principle involved. He applied pressure and the woman coughed up a piece of meat, but indicated that there was more. He tried again and a larger portion flew out. Another hospital employe brought her a glass of water and she regained her composure.

Wilson learned about the

Hug of Life when Tony Mullen, chief respiratory therapist at St. Joseph's, came into the kitchen almost two years ago to ask for a piece of meat to use in a mock-up he was using for a demonstration. Mullen had put together a rubber bag, representing a lung, and a piece of hose, representing the esophagus, which he had with him. He explained that he was part of the team filming the "Hug of Life."

The "Hug of Life," which teaches the "Heimlich Maneuver" for dislodging objects causing a person to choke, has been shown to many persons in the Elmira area, especially to staffs of restaurants. Reports indicate that more than 100 persons have been successfully aided with the maneuver in the Elmira area as a result of the movie.

Bishops' Synod Opens

By FATHER ROBERT A. GRAHAM SJ

Vatican City (RNS) — More than 200 bishops and other Church officials will discuss the catechism here for the whole month of October. It is the fifth world Synod of Bishops and their work was set for them by Pope Paul VI when he chose the topic "Catechesis in the World of Today, with Special Reference to Children and Youth."

This did not seem very promising to the world press, but correspondents came anyway, hoping for some fireworks. The opening day was a disappointment to them. With a masterful and unconscious sense of the banal, the Synod officials gave no "handle" for excited speculation. It was obvious that public opinion as

reflected in the press, has not yet managed to set the catechism in the categories of politics and contestation to which we have gotten accustomed.

That may change when the fathers come in direct confrontation with their peers, with different ideas and backgrounds. But at the start, the press only received a warning that the Synod of Bishops is not a mini-council, nor a pre-conclave, nor a states general or parliament. It is, said the Vatican spokesman, a collegial and universal consultation of the world episcopate and the curia.

The general lines can of course be anticipated the content and method of catechetics, that is, what to teach and how to teach it. Also, strange as it may seem,

the place — in the school, the church, the family, or, to use the nebulous but appealing phrase, "in the ecclesial community by the ecclesial community."

That means that everyone should consider himself or herself a catechist. No longer, according to one trend of thought here, is the catechism to be regarded as involving the child and the parish priest or sister. The whole Christian community should be both catechizing and catechized.

On opening day, the atmosphere did not register the tension that underlies the catechism question in some European countries. Instead, the attention and concern of commentators was pointed chiefly to the

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