

COURIER-JOURNAL

Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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Sister Establishes New Rural Ministry

**By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor**
Hornell — A one-to-one ministry to the poor and elderly of southwestern Steuben County has been initiated by Sister Margaret Louise Snider, RSM, through the sponsorship of her order and the supervision of the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry (STOSM).
The idea was Sister Margaret Louise's, who applied for and was granted sponsorship by her order for the work in the rural area. She noted that "my heart has always been with rural" ministry efforts, and she is happy to get the opportunity to do her present work.

Although living in Hornell, she is concentrating her efforts on the towns south and east of Hornell, primarily Canisteo, Rexville, Greenwood, Jasper, and the towns further east to Addison. Three Catholic churches serve the area: St. Mary's, Rexville; St. Joachim's, Canisteo; and St. Catherine of Siena, Addison.
The commitment by the Sisters of Mercy is the third such action in the Southern Tier in the past few years. The order continues its partnership with the Tioga County parishes in sponsoring two sisters who work among the poor there, and earlier this year, they provided the support

necessary for Sister Judith Reger to begin counseling in the area in anticipation of the formation of the STOSM.
For the past eight-and-a-half years, Sister Margaret Louise was a secretary in the Rochester Office of Human Development, she noted, adding that her new job actually comes after 40 years as a secretary, including 17 before she entered the Sisters of Mercy.
She described her work as a "one-to-one ministry," noting families she has aided and persons she already visits regularly. One woman she visited was despondent following her husband's death, she noted. She needed

assistance preparing for the winter in the three-room home she and her husband had built a room at a time. In addition to personal support, Sister Margaret Louise was able to make arrangements with the local weatherization project to complete work on her home.
She also helped a family with seven children which had had its electricity cut off. It meant a loan to repay the utility, but the electricity is back on, she said, and she also managed to find eight winter coats, hats and mittens to carry the family through the winter.
While traveling the back roads, she noted, she sees

homes in conditions which seem to indicate real need. She now is distributing forms for heating bill aid, she noted, and possibly will use that as a reason to call on the residents.
She has gotten names of people to visit from the St. James Mercy Hospital social work department, she reported, and from Father Thomas Burr, pastor of the Canisteo and Rexville parishes. She also has persons she visits refer her to others, she noted.
While the Sisters of Mercy are sponsoring her, she pointed out, the expenses of her ministry, such

as gas for the car, are coming through donations of individuals, parishes, priests, and a \$500 small grant from the STOSM. For the future, she noted, discussions will continue with Father Neil Miller, STOSM director, Father Michael Hogan, Steuben regional coordinator and others concerning diocesan support for the work, or for regular parish sponsorship.
After three months of her new work, Sister Margaret Louise commented that she is "grateful to the Sisters of Mercy for giving me the chance" to do the work, and added that "I love it — it's just like not going to work."

Merger Work Continuing

**By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor**
Hornell — Work toward the merger of St. James Mercy and Bethesda hospitals is continuing on several fronts.

The hospitals recently received local approval of a proposal for joint ownership of acute dialysis equipment, purchased a school building to be used for storage and transition needs during the anticipated construction, and are currently examining preliminary architectural plans for the two buildings.

The request to purchase the hemodialysis equipment has two unusual aspects. The request for joint ownership, Sister Mary-Rene McNiff, St. James administrator, reported, sent planners to the

health planning law as they previously hadn't seen a proposal for joint ownership. And then, she continued, the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency (FLHSA) recommended that the hospitals purchase two rather than one of the \$8,000 machines in order to insure the availability of treatment.

The request for two machines was scheduled for evaluation by the state Health Department Dec. 4.

Currently the hospitals rely on a less effective and more expensive peritoneal dialysis treatment. The new equipment, operated at bedside, performs hemodialysis. The dialysis process performs the function of the kidneys in purifying the blood when the kidneys have failed.

A nephrologist, Dr. Mavadi Hariprasad, who recently opened practice in Hornell, will head the new service. Several nurses at both hospitals are being trained in the equipment's use.

The machines will be used for acute dialysis, not chronic treatment. The hospitals have applied for a four-station chronic dialysis unit as part of the merger proposal.

St. James recently purchased Lincoln School from the Hornell City School District to provide additional space during the construction at both hospitals, and possibly to become the permanent site of some hospital departments. Sister Rene reported that the hospital purchased the school, which has 35,000 square feet of space, for \$50,000.

Hospital department heads and the boards of directors also are studying preliminary architectural plans for the two buildings, which specify locations in each building for services, according to the arrangement chosen by the boards.

the Lions' continuing focus on prevention of blindness and hearing problems.

Children to Be Feted At Rehab Center

Elmira — More than 50 children and their parents will join in a Christmas celebration Saturday, Dec. 13, courtesy of the Elmira Lions Club and the staff of the Twin Tiers Rehabilitation Center of St. Joseph's Hospital.

Santa Claus' arrival at 1 p.m. will begin the activities which will include a magician, games, a movie and presents. Member of the Lions Club will help with the party and serve refreshments.

The party will be the seventh the Lions Club has provided the patients of the Rehabilitation Center. The children, mostly outpatients, range in age from one to thirteen. Their afflictions include muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, speech and hearing disorders, and birth defects.

As part of the day's activities, Lions Club members will participate in a hearing clinic. The screening is part of

Deadline

The deadline for submitting news to the Courier Journal is noon on Thursday preceding the following Wednesday's publication.

Father Illig Scheduled To Speak

Bath — Father Alvin Illig, national director of Evangelization, will be the featured speaker for the Steuben Region's workshop on evangelization tomorrow evening at St. Mary's, Bath. The program will begin with registration at 7:15 p.m. In addition to Father Illig's presentation and summary, five workshops will be available, staffed by diocesans, discussing evangelization from the perspectives of parish renewal, through families, through youth and parish evangelization projects.

Retreat

Elmira — The Tri-Parish Youth Project is sponsoring a retreat for high school students Sunday, Dec. 14, which will be conducted by Father David Gramke. The program will be at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 314 W. Church St., and will run from 3 to 9 p.m. Registrations can be made by contacting Chris DeSocio, youth minister for the project, or at the door; there will be a \$2 charge.

Voice Clinic Set Up

Elmira — The Twin Tiers Rehabilitation Center of St. Joseph's Hospital has announced the establishment of a diagnostic voice clinic. Under the direction of the center's Speech, Hearing and Language Department, the clinic will offer services for children and adults exhibiting suspected functional or organic vocal problems. The initial clinic will be Friday, Dec. 12, starting at 9 a.m. The clinic will identify

problems and offer answers based on findings of an examination. Both the services of an ear, nose and throat specialist and a speech pathologist will be available. All services are free of charge.

Clinic services may be arranged through referral and by individuals. Appointments may be made by calling the Department of Speech and Hearing at 733-6541, ext. 360.

DCG Plans Reconciliation

Elmira — The Elmira Area Divorced, Separated and Widowed Catholics Group is sponsoring a reconciliation

service Sunday, Dec. 14, at 7:30 p.m. in the Interfaith Chapel of St. Joseph's Hospital.

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