

Kids' cuts

During a meeting last week at St. Mary's Church in downtown Rochester, members of the Rochester Area Children's Collaborative urged county legislators to not make any significant budget cuts in child-care funding. Page 7.



Violin virtuoso

Renowned violinist Tara Noval came home to St. Louis Parish in Pittsford last weekend to give a moving performance with the Greece Symphony Orchestra. Page 8.

Puff's papa

Peter Yarrow — of Peter, Paul and Mary — will bring his songs and his concern for education to Elmira, where he is scheduled to perform a benefit concert for Notre Dame High School on Nov. 15. Page 12.



Kearney cruises

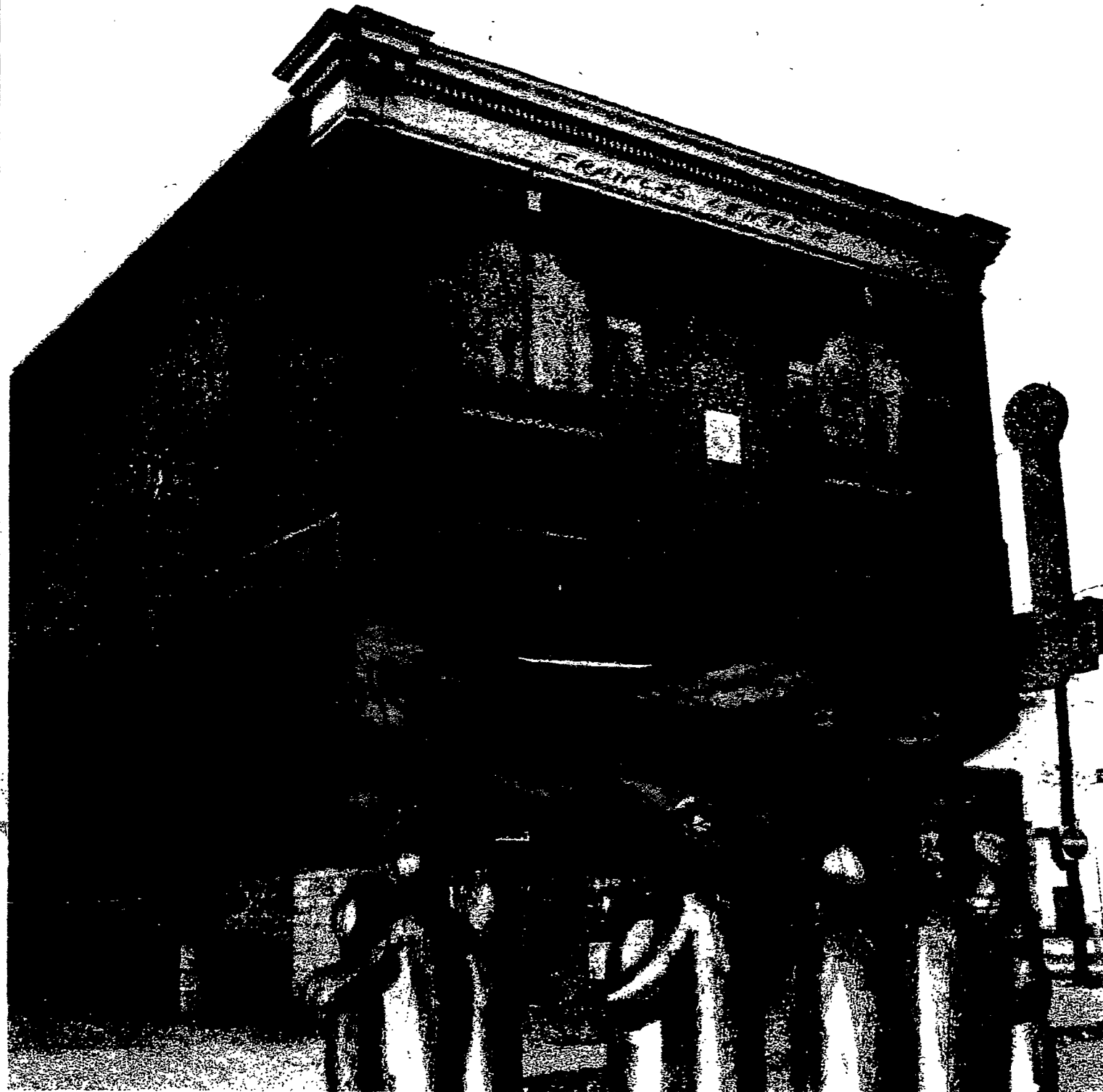
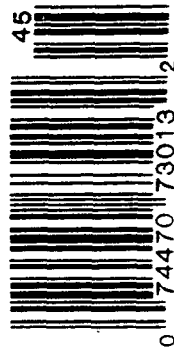
Bishop Kearney's football team combined a potent offense and a smothering defense to defeat Hornell, sending the Kings to the Section 5 Class A final against Newark. Page 16.

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Courier graphic: Lorraine Hennessey/Linda Dow Hayes

Shelters face extended future

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — After seven seasons of providing shelter for Rochester's homeless, the volunteers and staffs of the parish shelter network have learned there are no quick fixes for the problem of homelessness.

If anything, the problem is growing worse in spite of their efforts.

According to statistics from the Monroe County Department of Social Services, 1,441 individuals sought emergency housing through the department in 1988. The projected figure for 1989 is 1,550.

For families seeking emergency housing, the increase is even more startling: 386 in 1988, an estimated 450 in 1989.

And those figures do not include all the people who do not contact the county, who go to one of the non-governmental shelters, or who stay with relatives, friends or even acquaintances as "couch renters."

Even as they try to expand the variety of services they offer to Rochester's growing homeless population, the parish shelter providers must also contend with the frustration of dealing with government regulations and red tape.

Nowhere is that problem more evident than in the delays that have pushed the opening date of the Francis Hospitality Center into 1991.

The center, which was to replace the par-

ish shelters at Blessed Sacrament and St. Bridget's in 1990, was originally proposed in 1988. The Catholic Family Center applied for a grant from the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program of the state Department of Social Services to finance conversion of a building at 551 Joseph Avenue into a year-round shelter.

After months of delay, a \$570,000 grant was authorized in the fall of 1988. The City of Rochester approved an additional \$50,000, and the County of Monroe put up \$27,000 to help with the project. In addition, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine's parishes in Rochester and St. Louis Parish in Pittsford, contributed a combined \$41,500 to the project.

But Francis Center has been held up because the state contract for the grant has not yet been signed. Signing was delayed until architectural changes could be completed and submitted to the state for approval. Those changes were submitted and approved this spring.

The next delay came as Catholic Family Center waited to receive approval from the City of Rochester Zoning Board for converting the building — currently used for storage by Preferred Electric — to a shelter facility. That approval was finally granted July 12. The state was notified of this approval Sept. 11.

According to Michael Asbury of the New York State Department of Social Ser-

vices, now that the state has received notification of the zoning approval, the paperwork is in process. Asbury predicted that the contract will be signed within the next two months — a full year after the grant was first approved.

William Privett of the Catholic Family Center noted that even after the contract is signed, the work needed on the building will further delay Francis Center's opening by another 15 to 18 months.

"It's really discouraging, because you want to move forward and you have to wait," remarked Virginia Fairchild, head of the Advisory Committee on the Homeless, a local group established in 1988 to oversee implementation of the recommendations made in the 1987 report, Beyond Bed and Breakfast: Final Recommendations from the Mental Health Association's Task Force on the Homeless.

"I thought the plight of the homeless was at the forefront," observed Linda Rosier, director of St. Bridget's shelter. Rosier said she is now looking at the possibility of keeping the shelter open two to three more years. "It's really got me upset," she said.

Despite frustration about the delay, Rosier said St. Bridget's shelter will continue to provide the services that it has in recent years. When the shelter season officially begins Nov. 12, St. Bridget's will offer beds for as many as 10 men each night.

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