



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
A pigeon — one of many roosting in eaves and window ledges — alights from the roof of the former St. Monica's school building on Genesee Street. Recently purchased by Sojourner Development Corporation, the building will undergo extensive renovation to create 21 apartments for by former clients of Sojourner House, a shelter for women and children.

Sojourner gets approval for renovation

ROCHESTER — Sojourner Development Corporation has gotten the green light from the Zoning Board of Appeals to renovate the former St. Monica's school building at 837 Genesee St. into a subsidized apartment complex.

In a 6-0 vote Wednesday, July 18, the board gave the corporation a variance for the property on which the building sits, as the area is zoned for single-family residential use. Sojourner plans to spend \$1.5 million to renovate the building, which will house 21 apartments to be occupied by

former clients of Sojourner House, a shelter for women and children.

"Our clients have an extremely difficult time finding decent, affordable housing," said Virginia Fairchild, president of Sojourner Development Corp. She noted that Sojourner House has some 400 former residents, so finding occupants for the apartments will not be difficult.

Earlier this year, Sojourner bought the former school building for \$140,000, she said, noting that renovation work should

begin this fall and be completed by next spring. Fairchild added that "substantial" work must be done on the building's roof. The corporation has hired the construction firm of William R. Tyra & Associates, Inc., and the architectural firm of McClear DeMus.

Although she said funds will come primarily from grants and tax credits, Fairchild noted that the renovation financing is still being worked out.

— Rob Cullivan

Woman leaves newborn baby in emergency room

ROCHESTER — An unidentified woman left a newborn boy in the emergency room at St. Mary's Hospital on Genesee Street Thursday morning, July 19.

The woman walked in about 9:30 a.m. and handed the baby to a hospital security guard. The boy appeared to have been born a few hours before, with remnants of after-birth and the umbilical cord still attached to him. The woman left after telling the guard that the baby's parents would return for him, according to hospital spokeswoman Jeanne Pacitto.

City police Investigator Tony Campione said the baby was left by a woman described as 5 feet 4 inches tall, weighing 140 pounds, and appearing to be Hispanic.

So far, the police have not been able to find the woman, Campione said. "We had a couple leads that we checked out, and nothing panned out," he said.

The boy, who was given the name "Michael" by hospital staff members, weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce. The infant was healthy and spent a day and a half in the

hospital nursery before being placed with a foster family, said Bob Meteyer, information officer for the Monroe County Department of Social Services.

Meteyer observed that most people have assumed the woman who left the child was the mother, but that this assumption has not been proven.

"If she was (the child's mother), at least she had the sense to bring (the baby) to the hospital," he said. "She might have been in some kind of trauma," Meteyer speculated, adding that although the woman could face criminal charges for endangering the welfare of a child, DSS would rather encourage her to come in and talk about her situation.

"It's not like she left the baby in a public place or someone's doorstep," he said, explaining why the legal system might be lenient with her. But Meteyer noted that most women who abandon their children never attempt to seek them out or go to the authorities.

St. Mary's implements new dialysis program

ROCHESTER — St. Mary's Hospital recently opened a 12-station dialysis program on the ground floor of the hospital's office building at 909 W. Main St. The new program is serving patients in both acute and chronic stages of renal function. Two types of dialysis — peritoneal and hemodialysis — are currently available for in- and outpatients.

The dialysis unit also features peritoneal dialysis training, which teaches patients how to dialyze themselves at home.

The hospital also has announced two programs committed to furthering environmental protection. St. Mary's president, Patrick Madden, said the hospital will switch from using disposable diapers to cloth ones in its nursery.

"While the change to using cloth diapers provided by a diaper service does represent a higher cost to the hospital," Madden said, "we believe the cost is negligible

compared to the risks disposable diapers pose to the environment."

Disposable diaper use has been cited by environmentalists as contributing to the nation's growing landfill problem.

St. Mary's has also launched a paper trash recycling program called SMART — St. Mary's Actively Recycles Trash. Initially, the hospital will focus on recycling computer paper, Madden said, but by this summer, the recycling effort will include cartons, office paper and other paper products.

The hospital purchased a paper shredder so that some of the paper could be shredded in-house. That paper is then picked up by the Humane Society of Rochester and Monroe County and used to line animals' cages. In addition, the hospital's other paper trash is picked up free of charge by the Regional Recycling & Resource Recovery, Inc.

Meteyer noted that "Michael" was apparently the first baby to be abandoned in Rochester in 10 years. Pacitto said she couldn't recall a baby being abandoned at the hospital in recent years, but said that when St. Mary's opened in 1857, "this used to happen all the time ..."

— Rob Cullivan

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