How do you honor a treasured family home that holds the history of those who lived there for generations? How can its legacy be preserved for future generations to know more deeply the story contained within its walls?

In the spring of 2019, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi will be moving to their new convent. With the reality of having to let go of their 158-year-old “treasured home,” Sisters Rose Sevenich and Celia Struck, congregation archivist, felt something was needed to preserve its memory. They dreamed of developing a virtual tour of the Motherhouse that would tell the story of the sisters. Shortly thereafter, the Motherhouse Project was born. They enlisted the help of Dick Karshna, who recently retired after 44 years as supervisor of grounds and maintenance. They invited Jacquelyn Nasby, administrative assistant, who has expertise in digital recording, to join them.

During 2018, Sisters Celia and Rose and Dick and Jackie would film and photograph areas — from the basement to the attics, through the tunnels, and the beautiful grounds. Dick knew every nook and cranny of the Motherhouse, some never even seen by the two sisters. Sr. Rose shared how the walls of the Motherhouse hold the story of the growth of the congregation and the sisters’ lives in community. If only walls could talk!

As a result, a virtual, narrated tour of the Motherhouse will be developed. It will tell the history of the building and a story of the life within its hallowed walls — a lasting tribute to a treasured family home of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi.
On December 8, 2018, the Troubadour Meeting Room was transformed into what could be described as a Christmas wonderland. From the large lighted tree to the tables dressed in red and green to the smiles on everyone’s face, joy was evident. The room was stocked with handmade items and fresh bakery. But the special feature of all this was that all of the items for sale were made/baked by the sisters.

Even before the doors opened at 9:00 a.m., people were inching into the room hoping to start shopping. Bakery was sold out before the morning was up. The sisters’ crafts included items sewn, crocheted, knitted, painted, fashioned (jewelry), as well as homemade candy and caramel corn.

The café offered a respite for weary shoppers to enjoy hot drinks and cookies. St. Nicholas paid a visit and mingled with shoppers. The kind, benevolent man greeted everyone and took lots of opportunities to talk with the children and those who are children at heart.

This is the second year of the boutique. For the older sisters, it is reminiscent of the years when St. Ann’s Infirmary staff held a St. Ann’s Craft Fair in the gym of St. Mary’s Academy. Cookies weren’t baked then, but there were a variety of breads and rolls, as well as our famous fruitcakes. The sisters at St. Ann’s created crafts of all kinds that were sold at that fair.

A lot of community spirit is wrapped up into events like this because everyone is working toward a common

Sisters spent many weeks creating the craft items to sell, and then, as the boutique date drew near, the baking began in earnest, to ensure an excellent supply of fresh pastries, cookies, candies and more.
goal. This year on December 7, the booths were all set up early in the day. In the afternoon, some of our more frail sisters came to preview without the worry of maneuvering in a crowd.

For all those working at the boutique, there was a four o’clock Mass in anticipation of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, followed by a pizza supper. This was a great time to visit.

The boutique is held to benefit the Capital Campaign for our new convent. We are most grateful to all who participated by creating items to sell as well as those who did the purchasing. The success of the day belongs to everyone who was a part of the boutique.

Sisters spent the day assisting customers with their craft and bakery purchases, and offering Franciscan hospitality around the room and at the café.

St. Nick gave out a prayer card and a candy cane to all those he met.

See the back page for a construction update on the new St. Francis Convent.
WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

Building 1:
Level 01 interior finish work is ongoing, including ceiling grid, flooring & finish carpentry.
Level 02 interior finish work has begun with the prime/paint of walls & finish work to follow.

Building 2:
Finish work at the clerestory area remains ongoing.
Overhead mechanical ductwork installation is nearing completion as are mechanical/electrical/plumbing/fire protection rough-ins.
Drywall has been installed on Levels 01/02 and tape/finish work has begun.

Building 3:
Level 01 interior finish work remains ongoing, includes installation of mechanical trim, flooring and finish carpentry.
Level 02 interior finish work is nearing completion.

Site Work:  WE Energies is installing the permanent gas service.

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