

Telecare

Red Cross Program Checks on Elderly

CHICAGO (UPI) — An elderly woman living alone in suburban Des Plaines slumped to the floor and drifted into a coma. Her neighbor noticed nothing unusual. Her radio was playing and the lights were on. The woman's son and only regular visitor was away for the week.

"If she had lain there a week, she would have died," said Jo Ann Deslanders, director of Telecare, a Red Cross program that has volunteers check up on the elderly by telephone once a day.

Because Telecare persuaded a neighbor to check, the woman was rushed to the hospital.

Too many older persons living alone, often isolated by physical handicaps, poverty and fear, have become ill, their cries for help unheard, or have died, their absence unnoticed, Mrs. Deslanders said.

Frightening Thought
"I had a friend who fell and broke her hip. It was two days before anybody found her," Margaret Kennefich, one of the 130 elderly participants in the program, said.

The thought itself of being ill or injured and unable to reach help is frightening.

"When you get older, there is that fear that something will happen during the night. An accident when you can't get to the phone," said Min J. Curtis, a volunteer, 68, who telephones a fellow "senior citizen" in Chicago every morning at 9.

"You're really asking, 'Are you living?' Of course you don't say that," she said.

Jobs About the Weather
The call is about five minutes. It is made by the same volunteer from his or her office or home at a prearranged time.

The one-to-one basis of the program—also tells those who are lonely there is "someone in the community who cares," Mrs. Deslanders said.

"We talk about how each other is," Agnes Horton said about the call she receives every noon. "We have a joke about the weather. Just these little things. You get a comfortable feeling talking with her."

Mrs. Horton is 71, lives alone in a Chicago apartment and as she describes it, walks slower than a turtle. "I look forward to the call. It gives me something to think about."

It is not always easy to request help. It is hardest for those who until recently have led active, independent lives and enjoy living alone.

Volunteers Plentiful
"I could crawl into a hole rather than ask," Margaret Eagon said. "I don't like anybody to bother with me, but I need help."

"I'm just in that stage when it takes me five minutes to go from the bedroom to the bathroom."

Mrs. Kennefich said it was really a matter of "self-preservation. You never know when you'll take a tumble."

The program has received more offers to help from volunteers than requests for help from elderly Chicagoans.

"Who wants to admit I'm alone, friendless, familyless. They would rather sit or starve than admit they need help," Mrs. Deslanders said.

Mrs. Kennefich suggested it might be easier to sign up for the program if someone approached the elderly in person rather than rely on their calling up and requesting help. The Red Cross is in the process of contacting hospitals and churches to do just that.

Mrs. Deslanders said she warns volunteers against becoming too emotionally involved.

"It's not to be mean," she said, "but volunteers, only human, can promise more than they can fulfill."

"I think that could be quite a shattering blow. Some of them have very fragile existences," she said. m

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Sen. J.W. Fulbright, D-Ark., says he favors lifting the Sunday gasoline ban, mainly to stimulate the ailing tourist industry.

Joni Mitchell's Music Described as 'Beautiful'

By BRUCE MEYER
United Press International
"Beautiful" is one of the most overworked adjectives in the English language, but when the subject is Joni Mitchell — her music, her voice, her person — it is the only one that fits.

At a recent concert, Joni was into the third tune and her touring band, the L. A. Express, was chugging. She stepped up to the microphone, but someone in the audience called out to turn the volume down. Joni cocked her head and gave him a wry grin.

"Oh, boy," she said. "We've got a house full of purists. Can you hear the words?"

Yes.

"Well, all right then." If Joni Mitchell was ever a "folk singer" she is no longer. She is a unique musical entity and her music refuses to be forced into any such die-cut molds.

She is one of only three or four current songwriters deserving of the title "genius." Hers is a brilliantly personal kind of

music — intensely and revealingly intimate.

But unlike some writers who attempt to lay bare their soul on the assumption that any bare soul should be of interest, Joni Mitchell serves herself up with a kind of joy that frees the listener from the uncomfortable feeling of prying into another's privacy.

Her new album, "Court and Spark" (Asylum 7E-1001), is very nearly perfect, representing both a consolidation of all that was best in her previous work while expanding the range of her personal idiom. The arrangements are bigger, the tempos and rhythms more varied; the big-name backing musicians (from Jose Feliciano and David Crosby to Cheech and Chong) superb. And Joni's voice — stunning in its range and emotional content.

The apparent delicacy of her music — even the straight rock tunes — is misleading. It comes from the way she forces too many words into each line, from her complex melodies,

from her unique voice and delivery.

In reality, like some intricate Oriental construction, Joni Mitchell's music has a strength derived from the opposing tensions and stresses she places on it. That also explains why few of her songs are recorded by others: they depend on her personal delivery to become complete works. Beautiful.

one more burden for the energy-starved British to bear...the new Riders of the Purple Sage have added former Byrd Skip Batten, who replaces Dave Torbert on bass...10 Years After will be back in the U.S. for a tour in May.

Treen Backing Bill to Ban Car Interlock

WASHINGTON — Rep. David C. Treen, R-La., said yesterday he has cosponsored legislation to rescind a Department of Transportation requirement that all 1974 cars be equipped with a device preventing a car from starting until all front seat passengers or objects are securely harnessed with lap and shoulder straps.

Treen said seat belt fastening has relation only to the safety of the person involved in the decision and does not effect the safety of others. He also said the "so-called safety device is not only an inconvenience bordering on a nuisance, but in some cases could prove hazardous."



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