

Homestead



Joanne Hess . . .

'Seeing' With Music, Love, and Beautiful Colors

March 30 being Shut-ins Day we think of one ambitious and industrious lady with a melodious voice, alert mind, a kind and patient disposition and busy hands even though she must wear leg and ankle braces to get around and has been blind from birth. She is Miss Joanne Hess of 152 New Haven Street, Mount Joy.

It behooves each of us to count our blessings when we see someone like Joanne, handicapped as she is, yet has a will to do things for herself and does not want to be different from other people. She may have to do things the hard way, but she gets a lot of self satisfaction from doing things for herself.

Joanne said her mother always explained everything to her. She talks about seeing and of the beautiful colors, yet she has never been able to see anything nor been able to tell darkness from light.

Joanne says "My problem is getting around, in keeping my balance, more than seeing." For the most part she stays in her room on the second floor of her parents home. She tires of wearing her leg braces, so finds it easier to sit on the floor and fill her lap with things she wants to carry, then slides from place to place. Her room is a little crowded because she keeps things which she uses within reach. However, her room is clean and orderly and it is one of the most interesting places to visit.

Yes, you might say her room is an efficiency apartment. She has a mini-refrigerator and an electric oven-broiler so can prepare her own meals if necessary. She enjoys food and enjoys making meals for herself.

Besides her food storage and cooking equipment she has her bed, chairs, cabinets, musical instruments, needlework supplies and equipment, tape recorder, talking books, patterns, typewriter, cassette books, braille books and her collections.

Joanne is the daughter of Barbara and Henry K. Hess. She has two brothers, Henry B. and Jere. Henry is married and



Joanne Hess, Mount Joy, plays and sings with this baritone uke.

lives at Rheems. They have a two and a half year old son. Jere is married and lives in Florin. They have a daughter who is nearly seven years old. Henry K. is a transport driver for Sico. He delivers about half the gasoline to schools and institutions and the other half to retail stores. Joanne's mother baby-sits for her two and a half year old grandson.

Joanne reads compatible books to her nephew. These are story books with pictures and both braille and regular printed characters. These books are made for either blind parents or blind children or both.

Joanne grew up on a farm. Their house had a fence around it so she did not wander away too far. She said "I always had a time to find the house." Finally her grandmother turned the radio on and by locating where the sound came from she could find the door. She said "I liked cows, horses, kittens, dogs and flowers. I love the birds and the country." She still enjoys having a bouquet of fresh flowers on the dining table. She says "I get flower blubs. I like to raise flowers. I'd like to raise herbs and I'd like to get scented geraniums." Her mother raises African violets but she doesn't like the feel of the leaves. She doesn't like artificial flowers either.

Joanne's education started at four and a half years of age. She went to Overbrook School For The Blind in Philadelphia for two years. This school has an enrollment of about 250 students. She started in the fall and stayed there till Thanksgiving. The school closed from Thanksgiving till New Year's Day so children from a distance could go home for the



Mrs. Charles McSparran

holidays. She stayed there until Easter or the summer vacation. When she was in second grade she broke a bone and had to quit school. She has had a dozen or more bones broken between the ages of 8 and 12. Since that time she has had only a couple bones broken.

The doctors found she has a glandular condition which causes a calcium deficiency, which effects her muscles and nerves. She wears braces so she can walk.

Herbert Anderson, who is a rehabilitation teacher for the Association For The Blind in Lancaster taught Joanne some of the fundamental subjects like arithmetic and English. For her fifth and sixth grade work she had a radio-telephone hook-up to the regular public school. It was like an intercom and she didn't have any books. After that she went back to Overbrook School for six months for seventh grade work.

She then took a correspondence course at Hadley School For The Blind at Winnetha, Ill. This school is supported by Seroptomist Clubs, Lions Clubs and individuals.

Joanne then took a GED (General Educational Development) test at Harrisburg and passed it. She was the first totally blind person that ever took it. She has a high school diploma and says she would like to take a college level examination program. They are for people who haven't gone to college.

Miss Hess spent several months at Harmarville Rehabilitation Center in Pittsburgh; from there went to Greater Pittsburgh Guild For The Blind in Bridgeville, south of Pittsburgh; and took a 15 week course. There were 32 or 33 other trainees there, some severely retarded and some ready to go to college. There she learned hand writing, some typing, some cooking, household arts and had a course in elegant manners. Part of her training while at Pittsburgh was making arrangements for traveling such as getting tickets.

Mrs. Shell at Mifflintown taught her to pack a suitcase and started her to cook. The first thing she cooked was a chicken leg, some potatoes and carrots. Mrs. Ethel Kopp of Mount Joy has been very helpful to her also. She reads pattern directions onto a tape then Joanne uses her braille copier to copy patterns for her rake knitter, knitting, crocheting, hairpin lace, letters, instructions for electrical appliances and to learn music. A friend comes once a week to take her cassette and Braille books, ten inch recorder and talking books to the post office.

Joanne says she receives help from the Easter Seal Society and she also appreciates what the Lions Clubs and Seroptomist Clubs do. The Lions Club sponsors individuals, providing transportation (train tickets) to camps. It costs \$65. a week to go to Beacon Lodge Camp For The Blind. This camp is near Newton Hamilton, between Lewistown and Huntingdon. Joanne taught at this camp. She usually stays there about six weeks. She appreciates the fact that they have one section for adults and one for children. They have guide rails and they have a paved area as well as a grass area. With her walking problem she appreciates the paved area. She plays games there like Scrabble. They have many games and sports for recreation. Joanne used to paddle in the pool but she got a sinus infection so has been limited to floating and getting around in the water.

Joanne took piano lessons for 14 years, studying with Braille music. She gave a recital in 1960 but had to give up the piano two years later because of tiredness and strain. She has a lovely voice and loves music. She plays the baritone uke, and used to play an autoharp. She has a recorder, a melodica and a mouth organ. She also has some antique instruments—a mandolin harp, a ukelnd and a guitar harp or a Columbia harp.

Joanne uses her talents to entertain others. She puts on programs, singing, playing and demonstrating touch reading for Farm Women groups, PTA meetings and mother and daughter banquets. She used to go around visiting shut-ins and singing to them, friends took her. She attends Mount Joy Mennonite Church and their sewing circle. She helped make booties for the sewing circle.

Joanne belongs to the Blind Association. She really enjoys their activities, particularly Educational Week For The

Blind or "Blind Week" activities. The auxiliary to the Association For the Blind sponsors it. This year it will be held May 6 through the 10th, from 11 a.m. till 1 p.m. at the Masonic Center, 213 W. Chestnut Street in Lancaster and is open to the public. They will have a delicious luncheon for \$1.50, have a bazaar table where they sell cakes, pies, rhubarb, asparagus, chow chow, candy, cookies, craft articles and articles made by the blind. They have a display, showing how the blind read, write, crochet, sew, do chair caning, home skills and use some appliances. Joanne works there every year. This year the Overbrook School For The Blind will provide musical entertainment periodically.

The auxiliary's membership of people who see, provides glasses, have a picnic for blind people at Long's Park the second week of June, a Bingo party, an art class, bowling, a swimming class for instruction and entertainment. The auxiliary has a free clinic once a week at the General Hospital and once a week at the Saint Joseph's Hospital in Lancaster.

The Association For The Blind, Walnut and Mary Streets, Lancaster, has a sheltered workshop where they employ approximately 25 blind people for gainful employment. They



A ruffled doily, baby bib, tam-o-shanter, baby sacque, a cap and a doily with colored flowers and leaves around the edge which Joanne made.

do sub-contract work of various kinds. They welcome visitors. They have a radio station for the blind at the center where they read the morning and evening newspaper, have programs to inform and educate the blind. Blind persons need to have a special receiver set to receive their radio programs.

Joanne does all kinds of fancy work and really does lovely work. One method of knitting she uses is done on a rake knitter. A rake knitter is about 15 inches long and about three inches high, made of wood and somewhat resembles a bench with two rows of nails on the top of it. She made a sweater, scarves, a baby set of booties, hat and sweater. She knits and crochets Barby clothes, baby bibs, handkerchief edges, tam-o-shanters, caps, sweaters and doilies. She makes more of the doilies than anything else. She makes some lovely ruffled doilies in varigated colors. She speaks of the beautiful colors and it is through them she learns how to combine colors, what colors go together well. Her conception of color might be different from people who see but she still appreciates colors.

To give an idea of how long it takes to make some of her fancywork, it takes about six hours to make the center of a ruffled doily and about 12 days to make the ruffle. It takes about 12 hours to crochet a baby bib and about 4 hours to make a rabbit which she stitches on the bib. She is crocheting a tablecloth, has a pattern for a beaded doily that she is going to make and yarn to make a cart wheel pattern afghan in orange, brown and white. She is also going to crochet a little girl's dress. She has made a baby hat, sacque, booties, stole and a rug with hairpin lace. She has been making daisy winder flowers to make an afghan. She says she would like to have someone to show her how to tat and she would like to have a thermoform machine and set up a business making patterns.

Another thing Joanne likes to do is read. She likes to read a talking book while she crochets or knits. She gets Good Housekeeping, Natural History, American Heritage, Dialogue and a couple magazines for the handicapped in talking book form. There are also some other magazines

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