

# Centre Region seeks to aid elderly

By JAN MASCIOLI  
Collegian Staff Writer

The needs of the elderly can be many and complex and the municipality of State College is "making a maximum effort to provide for these needs," according to Ronald N. Short, Centre Regional planning director.

The borough and the townships direct their attention to the problems of a minority of 200 to 300 State College senior citizens, Short said.

Eloise Melson, a state welfare policy specialist in Harrisburg, said there were 1,437,000 persons over 65 years old living in Pennsylvania in 1975. The Centre Region's elderly (over 60) constituted 7.81 per cent of the region's 43,059 residents (this figure does not include Penn State University dormitory and fraternity house residents).

Short said the vast majority of the 8,800 senior citizens in the Centre Region have few problems.

The majority of those who responded to a 1975 Centre Region survey by the planning commission were "not prone to feeling lonely," but 8.2 per cent "felt lonely a lot of the time," the survey said.

According to statistical tabulations of a 1972 state senior citizens study, 95 per cent were either very happy or fairly happy.

Only 5 per cent said they were unhappy. Most of the 104 senior citizens who completed the survey saw themselves as middle-aged and 92 per cent were satisfied with life today.

The planning commission, after examining various problem areas, decided that housing was the "primary need of the elderly." It concluded that a need existed for approximately 30 public-assisted elderly housing units primarily for widowed women living by themselves.

After many delays, the State College Borough Council approved on March 25 an 18-apartment unit on Bellaire Avenue for senior citizens.

The planning commission's survey indicated the need for the housing based on the following results:

— 4 per cent (or 98) of the elderly housing units are deteriorating.

— 71 senior citizens are dissatisfied with their present dwelling unit and half of these are low-income occupants.

Nationally, about one-third of the elderly over 65 years of age lived alone in 1972. But in the region, less than 25 per cent of the survey respondents lived alone.

Melson said 85 per cent of Pennsylvania residents over 65 live in a house and 14 per cent live in apartments, according to the 1972 senior citizen study.

Of these 85 per cent in homes, 74 per cent own them, the study said.

Of the 1,437,000 elderly in Pennsylvania, 25 per cent live in rural areas and 5 per cent live in either group quarters or institutions, according to Melson.

In 1973, the estimated median income of those families over 65 years old was \$7,221, Melson said. For individuals living alone or with non-relatives, the estimated median was \$2,610, she said.

The state's 1972 senior citizens study also showed that 81 per cent indicated that convenient places to shop were available; Centre Region residents who responded to the survey also agreed with this statement.

The availability of the convenience of doctors and clinics was also indicated in both surveys.

Although the region's libraries and parks were easily accessible to its residents, these places were never visited by the majority of respondents, the study said.

The survey also stated, "public transportation is considered convenient and can take respondents where they want to go in Centre Region, but only 2 per cent of the respondents would take a bus and only 8 per cent have used the bus."

Most elderly persons own a car, but for

those who don't, Centre County's Area Agency on Aging in Bellefonte provides a "sunshine van" Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for transportation to doctor's offices, shopping centers or the bank, said Jim Yonai, the agency's operations coordinator.

The elderly can also ride the county's buses for free during the times other than peak afternoon and evening hours.

The survey revealed that most senior citizens in the region have activities besides their homes, but most respondents don't go to the movies, club meetings or use public transit.

The state survey revealed that 88 per cent of the elderly get outside as often as they would like to. Fifty-six per cent never get out to meetings or clubs, while 27 per cent get out two or more times.

Most respondents (93.9 per cent) to the regional survey had no trouble shopping for food. Of those who had trouble getting to a supermarket, 89.8 per cent had help available, the survey said.

The majority of respondents spent \$20 to \$25 per week for food.

The study indicates that the general food, housing and transportation needs of senior citizens in the region are satisfied and that less than 3 per cent have pressing problems in these areas.

# Parley focuses on future format of liberal arts

By JUDY BEVAN  
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Collegian Staff Writers

Many questions were raised at the Liberal Arts Faculty Conference concerning the future of the liberal arts curriculum in the next decade. But answers were scarce.

"It is inconceivable that anyone could come away from this conference without being fully aware of the problems we face," according to Ronald L. Filippelli, a Pattee librarian. His comments were part of the closing session of the conference yesterday.

A major problem cited by Filippelli was that "students and dollars are in a mad race to see which can disappear first."

"What we (liberal arts) have to offer is indispensable and of personal value," Filippelli said. "Vocationalism is not the answer."

Although changes in curriculum were proposed, Philip A. Klein, professor of economics, said the faculty, not the students, should determine what these changes will be.

Klein said the faculty can draw on its own perspective and expertise to know what courses will stand students in good stead. It is not so that students know best, he said.

Evelyn A. Hovanec, associate professor of English at the Fayette campus, called the conference a "consciousness-raising experience. If nothing else has been accomplished," she said, "we finally got to gripe out loud."

Hovanec stressed the need for liberal arts faculty to keep talking, communicating and studying the information collected during the conference.

Proceedings of the conference will be published and made available to the liberal arts faculty and the administration, according to Stanley F. Paulson, dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

The publication will identify the questions raised and the recommendations made. These will be considered by the College Policy Committee and the Council of Liberal Arts Senators, who will report their findings to the dean and his staff.

Issues and recommendations then may be referred to a committee under either of these bodies, or dealt with by a special task force set up by Paulson.

During the morning session, research papers were presented by Carroll C. Arnold, professor of speech communication and Roland J. Pellegri, sociology department head.

While Arnold stresses the need to attract new students through innovations in curriculum, Pellegri advised against hastily abandoning present programs.

"Real access is rare when dealing with new innovations in higher education," Pellegri said.

# County Commissioners approve reduced funds

By BILL REBER  
Collegian Staff Writer

The Centre County Board of Commissioners yesterday voted to approve the receipt of reduced state and federal funds for the public defender's office, but agreed to continue efforts to secure the amount originally requested.

The Governor's Justice Commission (GJC) has informed the county that it will receive only \$12,000 instead of the \$14,788 they had requested for fiscal year 1976.

Originally, the county had

been told they would receive 80 per cent of the costs for establishing a full-time public defender's office.

Jeffrey A. Bastuscheck, administrator for the central region of the GJC, said the cut in the county funding reflected a nationwide reduction.

He said the central region responded to the funding cut with a proportional reduction of appropriations to all participating counties and with specific cuts based on need.

Notified of the county's intention to try and secure the remainder of the requested funds, Bastuscheck said there was no more money available.

A reduction in services at the public defender's office in response to the reduced allocation could jeopardize the remaining funds, Bastuscheck said.

No response to the funding cut beyond requesting the GJC to give the commissioners the full amount was discussed.

Other federal funds were the issue when the commissioners approved the closeout of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act Title VI grant for last year.

Closeout of the grant means the return of \$40 remaining from \$487,646 provided last year. Doug Ford, county grants coordinator, told council.

Funding in the amount of \$488,050 has been provided for this year under Title VI, but provisions of the grant call for

the return of all funds not spent in the year for which they are allocated.

Centre County's receipt of the first annual Voter Registration Award makes the significance of University voters apparent.

In other business, commission chairman John T. Saylor said Secretary of the Commonwealth C. Delores Tucker presented him with the first annual Voter Registration Award in recognition of the 29 per cent increase in voter registration

in the county between the primary and general elections last year.

Paul Stevenson, director of Undergraduate Student Government Department of Political Affairs, said the award was won largely on the strength of Penn State student registration.

The award consists of a Pennsylvania-shaped plaque which will pass from one winning county to another and a citation from Gov. Milton J. Shapp.

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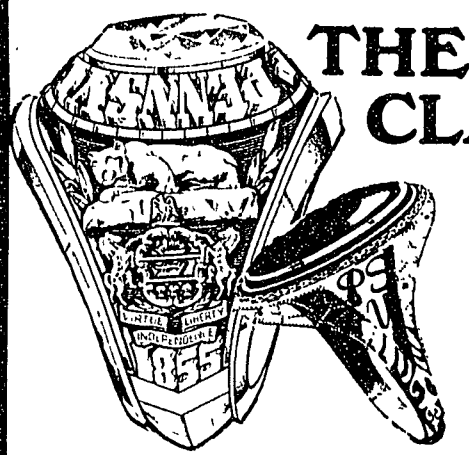
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