

the daily collegian **living**

a look at life in the University community

Thursday, Dec. 11 6

Realities of old age confront local senior citizens

By DOUG BELL
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Age is the most universal of concepts. Day by day, year by year, each of us is changed by the passing of time. And one day, signalled perhaps by the wrinkling of skin, the graying of hair or the stiffness of gait, we will come to be known as "elderly."

Yet few people realize what it means to be elderly. Few know what it means to live on a fixed income when inflation makes every dollar worth less and less. Few know the frustration of having chronic health problems and being unable to meet rising health care costs. Few know the exasperation of needing to get somewhere and being unable to drive a car or find public transportation.

But for many of our elderly, both in Centre County and throughout the United States, this is an accurate picture. Sunny pictures of retirement communities filled with lazy hours on front porch swings have lulled us into believing that old age is a time of rest and leisurely reflection — when, in reality, many of our elderly are involved in a daily battle to survive.

About 11,000 elderly people — defined as anyone older than 60 — live in Centre County. That figure represents approximately 11 percent of the county's population.

According to Joseph Britton, a University professor of human development and the chairman of the State College Senior Citizens Commission, Centre County is "farther along than many others in its care of the elderly."

Britton attributed this to "good leadership, alertness to resources, knowledge of possibilities and a belief that we can better the conditions of living."

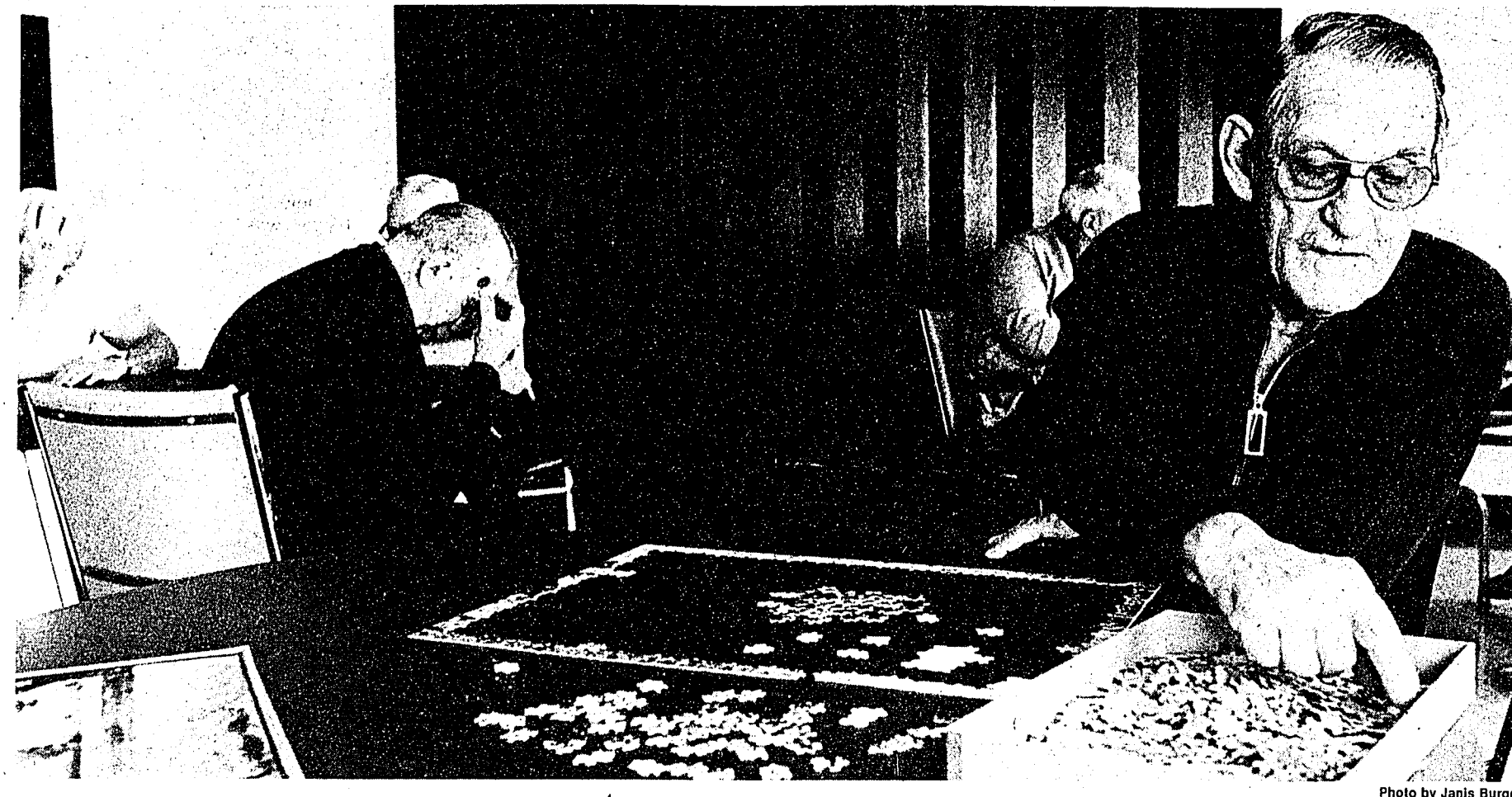
But Britton, along with many others, agreed that the elderly in Centre County still have problems. Transportation, housing, health care, finances and loneliness head the list.

Lillian Husted, a State College resident who was appointed by Gov. Dick Thornburgh to a state regional council on the elderly, does not think the elderly in Centre County are as well off as some might believe.

Husted said a lack of funds for care of the elderly makes it difficult to provide help to the elderly who need it most.

"We are not reaching the people who need to be reached," she said. "As long as we don't have the money, we can't go out and actively solicit."

Cynthia Edvar, the director of Centre



These elderly men at Mt. Nittany Residences in State College spend an afternoon building jigsaw puzzles, playing cards or talking.

Photo by Janis Burger

County's Area Agency on Aging, said the agency's main goal is to serve the elderly with the greatest need. Among the services provided by the AAA — either directly or through sub-contracts — are transportation and from community facilities, home-delivered meals and homemaker services.

In addition, the AAA operates five senior citizens centers and two meal sites around the county, provides information about various services available, employs counselors and caseworkers, and provides a friendly visitor service to county elderly.

Edvar said one of the biggest problems of the elderly in Centre County is transportation, and slightly more than 14 percent of the AAA's \$500,000 budget in 1979 was spent in that area.

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Low incomes inevitably lead to other problems for the elderly, namely housing and health care. At Casher, Centre County Housing coordinator, said 423 low-income housing units are now available to county elderly. But Casher said that number is only about half of what is needed.

"About three or four years ago we identified the need for about 700 low-income elderly units countywide," Casher said. "We're about halfway there."

In State College, Bellare Court provides 18 low-income housing units to senior citizens, and Mt. Nittany Residence complex near Hills Department Store contains 10 low-income units for the elderly.

Mt. Nittany Residences, which opened late last summer, has vacancies; Bellare Court has five units open.

Obtaining adequate health care is another major problem for the elderly. Amos Neyhart, president of the State College Senior Citizens Club, said many elderly people neglect their health because they can't afford proper care.

"Fear is the elderly's biggest problem," Neyhart said. "They don't know what the future holds. A lot of old people are neglecting their health because they fear they'll get themselves into something for which they can't pay — and what little they have will be taken away from them."

Husted, who is also president of the advisory council for the Centre County AAA, believes the key to health care is preventive medicine through nutrition, education. She also said children and grandchildren of the elderly should take a more active role in caring for their needs.

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Many of the elderly's needs are being met, but many still exist. Until those needs are met, aging will still be an enemy — instead of a natural part of the life cycle.

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Student opinions on calendar gathered

By MARK GREEN
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

A final report on student opinions of the proposed calendar change is scheduled to be presented to the University Council on Dec. 18, the coordinator for the Undergraduate Student Government project said.

The report will include results from three workshops which informed students about the proposed switch to a semester system, said Mark Berg, chairman of the USG Executive Council's Committee for Credible Student Input.

It will also contain information from a telephone survey of 400 University Park students and 250 Commonwealth campus students, as well as a section listing the problems unique to each student organization, Berg said.

The committee ran into several minor problems in the course of its investigation, including difficulties getting the survey printed and getting volunteers to conduct the survey, he said.

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The investigation, which began in September, had been scheduled for completion on Dec. 1, but an extension was granted by the administration until Dec. 19. Berg said his committee had not requested the extension but appreciated the extra time.

"We knew it was going to be a long process at the onset," Berg said, "but we didn't go in with the knowledge that it would take longer than the deadline."

Fran Kenawell, president of the Association of Residence Halls Students, said the committee started slowly because of confusion over the issues.

"No one really had a good idea of what University President John W. Oswald meant with a semester change," he said. "I don't even know if now we can give a good input either way."

Berg agreed. "That's a big problem — they don't have the specifics." However, even with this vagueness, most people surveyed had an opinion on the matter, he said.

Berg said if the committee had worked through term break it could have met the original deadline. "Had the deadline been kept at Dec. 1, we would have had it in by the first," he said.

Committee member Andrea Solat said the committee is now waiting for the organizations to turn in their specific concerns and for the results of the telephone survey to be run through the computer for a double-check.

Elite Sternberg, a student representative on the University Council, said that after the committee's final report is presented, the council will combine it with other investigations into one major report on non-academic reactions to the proposed change.

The committee will present the report to Oswald before the new Feb. 1 deadline, Sternberg said.

James Dungan, special assistant to the director of planning and budget, said if Oswald decides to change to a semester system, there will be ample room within the four-year planning of the new system for student groups to aid in the planning of the new calendar.

Berg refused to comment on whether the report will indicate that the students are in favor of the change or not. He said it would be unfair to the administration if it was not notified first.

"I think we hit the major concerns and a lot that no one even thought of," he said.

The results of the telephone survey will be made public at Thursday's meeting of the University Student Advisory Board.

Berg was optimistic about the report's effect on the administration's decision.

"If the students do come out strongly one way or the other, we hope the University will look seriously at it," he said. Still, Berg said he doubts the committee will ever know how much the University relied on the report in making its decision.

HUB presents John Lennon tribute today

The Hetzel Union Board will present a nontime concert of Bob Dylan doing a memorial to John Lennon at noon today in the HUB Ballroom.

Men's basketball coach Dick Harter will be the guest on Sportstalk at 8 tonight on WDFM, 91 FM.

The Student Health Resource Organization will meet at 7 tonight in 307 Boucke.

The Individual and Family Studies Undergraduate Student Organization will hold a counseling skills workshop at 7 tonight in the Living Center of Human Development Building.

The Agronomy Club will meet at 7:30 tonight in 111 Tyson.

The sailing division of the Penn State Outing Club will meet at 7:30 tonight in 112 Buckhout.

Common Cause will meet at 7 tonight in 309 Boucke. New members are invited.

The Student Christian Involvement Program will hold an Advent Communion Breakfast at 7 this morning at the Faith United Church of Christ, 300 E. College Ave.

The Undergraduate Student Government department of women's services will meet at 7 tonight in 306 Boucke.

Persons interested in working with the morale committee at the Interfraternity Dance Marathon will meet at 7 tonight in 102 Forum.

The Student Assistance Center will hold a study skills workshop at 3:45 this afternoon in 317 HUB. Study habits and test-taking skills will be featured.

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Audio-visual devices stolen, police report

The Heritage Run Office Center, 3339 S. Albright St., was burglarized Tuesday, state police from the State Correctional Institute at Rockview said. Office and audio-visual equipment valued at \$16,088 was stolen, police said.

Scott Fogelsanger told the State College Police Department four oriental rugs were stolen from Balford Fabric Care Services, 320 W. Beaver Ave., between early September and early December. Police estimated the value of the rugs at \$2,400.

A car driven by Janice Mayes, 17, Boalsburg, was forced off the road into a fire hydrant in an accident by an unknown vehicle on Main Street in Boalsburg on Tuesday, state police at Rockview said.

Mayes was accompanied by Sharon Mayes, who was taken to Centre County Community Hospital, treated and released for minor injuries, a hospital spokesman said.

Police estimated the damage to the Mayes car to be moderate.

Martha Wrye, Milesburg, told state police at Rockview two rings were stolen from her home sometime in the past two months. Police estimated the value of the rings at \$500.

Robert D. Weaver, 711 W. Foster Ave., told State College police two pine trees were stolen from his property on Sunday. Police said the original cost of the trees was \$160, but replacement costs would be more.

State College police said approximately \$159 was stolen from the Thom McAn shoe store at the Nittany Mall on Nov. 26 by falsifying monetary return slips. Police said the store is still under investigation.

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