

Act Provides Activity

► **HIDDEN TALENTS**—from painting to salesmanship—have a chance to blossom in the aging population of local communities under the Older American Act.

The newest of the major operating units of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare—the Administration on Aging—brought to Washington the first annual conference of state executives on aging to discuss goals and problems in this new day for older Americans.

Since President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Older Americans Act last July, 30 states and the District of Columbia have presented plans qualifying them for funds to strengthen and coordinate their activities for the aging.

Multipurpose activity centers are being made a part of public housing projects in some cities. In others, a permanent center can be bought where old people can go for recreation, education, food service and information from the Social Security Administration, the Visiting Nurse Association, employment services and other agencies.

Here is one example of a successful art program at work in Ann Arbor, Mich. Mrs. Myra Chapin, retired head of the art department at the University of Michigan High School, is teaching painting to a group of elderly artists who are actually selling their work.

Dr. Wilma H. Donahue, chairman of the division of gerontology at the university's institute for human adjustment, told **SCIENCE SERVICE** that one of the biggest problems is to get trained personnel for local programs. Dr. Donahue is one of 15 on the Advisory Committee on Older Americans, whose chairman is William D. Bechill,

Commissioner on Aging of the new Administration on Aging.

Teacher aides from among the elderly are being used in Detroit and other cities, Dr. Donahue said. A child with a reading difficulty can be helped by an aide who has the time to listen to such a reader. A youngster having trouble in manual training can be helped by an older man who has specialized in the use of tools.

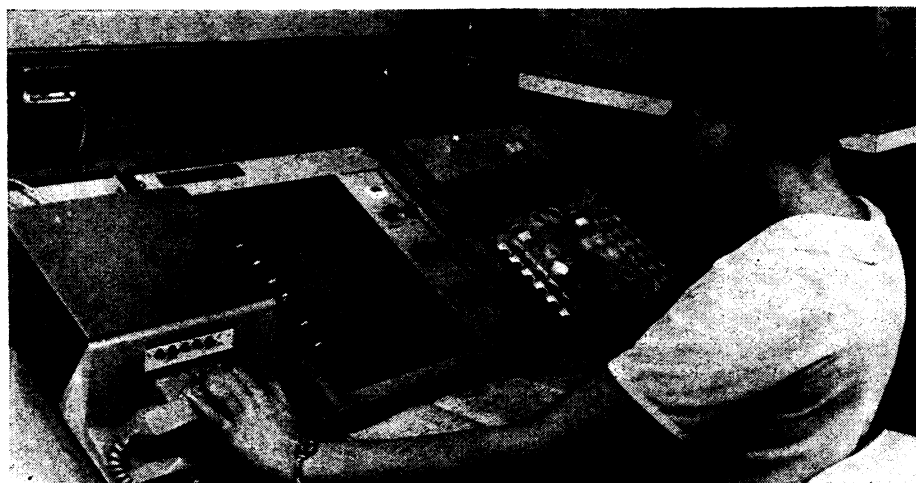
One of the basic problems with old people is transportation to centers, and Dr. Donahue said it was her opinion that there should be a Government transportation subsidy so that volunteer drivers would not have to have injury liability insurance.

Medicare will cover many of the health needs of the aging, but the healthy older population often has problems of loneliness that can be met by provisions of the Older Americans Act.

The state agency designated by the governor to administer the program may use its allotment funds to make grants in turn to local government agencies and private nonprofit organizations for community programs and services. Local groups have complete freedom in planning their programs, based on the needs of people in the community.

States that have received go-ahead approvals are: Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

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Marquette Electronics, Inc.

HEART DATA FROM TELEPHONE—A new electronic system, developed by Marquette Electronics, Inc., Milwaukee, has been unveiled by Northwestern University Medical Center, Chicago. The system takes heart data over the telephone and quickly turns it into microfilmed electrocardiograms.

Rat Ovary At Last Acts As Animal Ovary Should

► **THE FEMALE RAT** has had scientists puzzled for years because her ovaries did not appear to behave as ovaries should, that is, produce female hormones called estrogens. Two scientists finally have proof that mama rat is doing a proper job.

Estrogens are sometimes called the "heat hormone," because they prepare the female tissues for their reproductive period. But it was not until isolated rat ovaries in laboratory dishes were treated with a vinegar-like acetate in the culture medium that they were found to behave like those of other animals.

Drs. Albert Segaloff and B. F. Rice of the Alton Ochsner Medical Foundation impregnated the acetate with radio-carbon atoms so that it could be traced. With new techniques developed for the separation of the hormones, they analyzed the substances synthesized by the ovaries. The glands had produced enormous quantities of progestins, the hormones that help uterine tissues anchor the fertilized egg during pregnancy.

The progestins were loaded with acetate radioactivity.

Careful examination showed that traces of two estrogens also had formed, but that they contained 150 times less radioactivity than the progestins.

The American Cancer Society, which helps support the research, reported the findings.

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Computer Conversation Speeds Information

► **TELEPHONE** a computer and it will answer. A new voice response system that can give verbal answers to questions fed into a computer from as many as 100 remote points has been developed by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA).

The system is applicable to banks, stores, credit bureaus and other organizations that need to obtain routine information quickly.

To check on items in stock, for example, a clerk would simply dial the number assigned to the voice system and, after receiving a signal to go ahead, make his inquiry by pushing buttons on a special telephone device.

The computer accepts the request, searches for the answer in its memory unit, prepares the proper return message and converts it to a response from a prerecorded magnetic drum.

In seconds, the spoken answer is received directly by the caller.

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