



NEWS AROUND

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Prime Time

Staying in Touch With Mrs. Carter

by Harriet Miller

In the months before she moved to the White House, Rosalynn Carter mentioned her interest in the problems of aging many times.

On May 10, Mrs. Carter held her first meeting with professionals in the field of aging; no other First Lady had ever convened such a meeting. She had invited them to the White House to brief her on the important issues and to suggest ways that she might be part of the solution to the problems of growing old.

Mrs. Carter's 22 advisors came from the Congress, the National Retired Teachers Association, the American Association of Retired Persons, the National Caucus on the Black Aged, the Gray Panthers, the National Conference on the Spanish-Speaking Elderly, the National Council on the Aging, and several other groups.

In preparing for the meeting, Mrs. Carter's staff debated the order in which the advisors would deliver their prepared statements to the First Lady. That particular problem was solved, appropriately enough, by asking the oldest speaker to go first, followed by the others in descending order of age. Therefore, the youngest—nearly a half-century younger than Rep. Claude Pepper (D-Fla.), who at 76 led off the speakers—found themselves in the position of having to wait until near the end of the meeting to be heard.

Since the young are reputed to have more of everything—except years—than the old, it is to be assumed that they accepted their role in the order of things with much grace and patience.

One of the more interesting ideas that emerged at the discussion came from Cyril Brickfield, who represented the National Retired Teachers Association. He suggested that Mrs. Carter encourage the first ladies of other countries to organize with her an international conference on aging. The conference could serve as a vehicle for sharing ideas and successes among the nations, which, in spite of many cultural and language differences, often have common problems.

Rep. Pepper talked to Mrs. Carter about mandatory retirement. He is a sponsor of one bill to eliminate the mandatory retirement age, which is now 70, from federal employment, and another that would remove the

upper age limit from the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, which now protects employees from age 40 to age 65. Rep. Pepper said, "The argument that mandatory retirement of the elderly opens needed jobs for young workers will ultimately be nullified by a return to a full-employment economy. But until that time we must ask whether forcing able-bodied persons who want to continue to work into an overburdened social security system is economically or socially justifiable."

Other speakers talked about the need for courses in geriatric medicine in the medical schools, the shameful state of some nursing homes that house many of the frail elderly, the lack of suitable, low-cost housing for older and retired persons, the plight of many Indians and natives of Alaska who do not qualify for retirement benefits of any kind, and the myriad other issues affecting the 23 million people over 65 who live in America today.

One of the last speakers was Peter Hughes, who represented the millions of members of the American Association of Retired Persons. Said Hughes: "Only when the stereotypes of age and the ignorance and fear of aging are erased will 'ageism' disappear. And we are realistic enough to know that government is limited in its ability to change individual attitudes about aging."

"You, however, Mrs. Carter," he continued, "as the First Lady of this nation, have a great opportunity to help bring about change in public opinion and erase ageism from our society."

He encouraged Mrs. Carter to remind the public again and again of the immorality of age discrimination. He suggested she relate the issues of aging to other areas of interest to her. He proposed that she set up an advisory panel on problems of aging that could meet regularly with her and keep her in touch with the issues in all of their aspects. Finally, he urged her to enlist the support of the President in eradicating ageism in all of its forms in the United States.

Promised Mrs. Carter at the end of the discussion: "I'll be in touch."

(Harriet Miller is the executive director of the non-profit, non-partisan National Retired Teachers Association and American Association of Retired Persons in Washington, D.C.)

Hospital schedules new project

A pilot project in hypertension screening has been funded for Columbia County by the Oregon State Health Division.

Conducted by Columbia County Community Health Services, a branch of the Columbia Hospital District, the program will involve a three-month test of methods which are to be utilized in an expansion of the program in the fall, according to Robert D. Brown, administrator.

Susan Brookhart, RN, will be conducting the program with the assistance of volunteer agencies in the five major communities in Columbia County.

The initial project will involve testing of a representative sam-

ple of the Columbia County population. Hypertension (blood pressure) screening will be done during the month of August on persons in the business communities in St. Helens, Scappoose, Rainier, Clatskanie and Vernonia.

If the initial screening indicates a hypertension problem, Mrs. Brookhart will make a follow-up visit and test the blood pressure for the third time. If a problem is indicated then, the individual will be referred to a physician or a clinic. Additional follow-up will be done to determine whether or not an appointment has been made for testing by a physician.

Personnel from the St. Helens, Scappoose,

Rainier, and Clatskanie Rural Fire Districts and the Vernonia Ambulance Association will be handling the initial screening process under Mrs. Brookhart's direction.

A 1971 graduate of the University of Oregon School of Nursing, Mrs. Brookhart spent a year working in a surgical intensive care unit in Portland, two years as assistant head nurse of an intensive-care-coronary care unit in Tucson, Arizona, and one and a half years in a community health program in Tucson.

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Need help? Contact IRS

The chamber of commerce has received information from the Internal Revenue Service director for Oregon, Ralph B. Short, that

any taxpayer who feels he has not received a satisfactory solution to his tax problems, may contact the Problem Resolution Officer.

Letters should include details of the problem, steps taken to resolve it, and any

other pertinent information including the tax payer's social security number for identification.

Mail to: IRS, PO Bx 3341, Portland, OR 97208.



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