

# Family Living

The Portland Observer

## Many veterans unaware of benefits

Although over \$42 billion were paid out in veterans benefits last year, billions more went unclaimed in the past few years.

Every year eligibility for and the array of available benefits are changed and very few veterans or their survivors keep up with the latest rules. Because of this, and changes in their circumstances, many veterans, their families and survivors are now entitled to money and other benefits from the government even though they were not eligible in the past.

A study group of the Consumer Education Research Center, a 25-year-old national nonprofit consumer group found that over one-fourth of the money paid in veterans benefits goes to persons who never served in the armed forces of the United

States.

Most of these were related by blood or marriage to veterans but many were not. Others were members of the armed forces of countries who fourth with us against our enemies.

Each year the Center compiles a book describing the latest rules on available benefits and how to qualify for those benefits. The 240 large-page Complete guide to federal and state benefits for veterans, their families, and survivors for Consumer Center, 1980 Springfield Ave., Maplewood, NJ 07040 or by calling 1-800-872-0121.

Mr. Robert L. Berko, executive director of the consumer group, says that many survivors of veterans are unaware that they might be eligible to receive money, medical care, edu-

cational assistance, help in buying a home or other benefits.

In fact, eligibility and benefits change constantly and some people ineligible in previous years are now able to start receiving money.

The study found that many people are unaware that they are considered dependents or survivors of veterans.

These include those involved in illegal marriages, those who remarried after the death or disability of a veteran, children born out of wedlock to a veteran, parents of a veteran and even dependent grandchildren. Any of these may be eligible for benefits.

Mr. Berko says that the study questioned veterans about benefits and found that the majority were unfamiliar with most of the benefits now

being granted under Federal and state laws. Even veterans now collecting were unaware of other benefits for which they were eligible and could be collecting.

For instance, disabled veterans can receive apparel allowances if they use wheel chairs, artificial limbs or any prosthetic device that can wear or damage clothing and, if they have a spouse in need of care, they can receive an allowance to pay someone to provide that care.

Few knew that the Bureau of Veterans Affairs is required to send veterans any requests for bids on supplies or labor that are mailed to any other suppliers.

**Other benefits the consumer found that were little known are:**

- A veteran (or dependent) can receive up to \$837 (40% in advance)

if he or she will assist the VA in a work-study program while in an educational program.

• Federal agencies are required to establish affirmative action to facilitate employment and advancement of veterans with any degree of disability. In fact some job classifications must be filled by eligible vets.

• Family members of veterans buried or mentioned on commemorated on Tablets of the Missing overseas are eligible for free passports if they say they want to visit these sites.

• Disabled veterans can obtain extra compensation of hundreds of dollars per month in addition to their 100% disability if they have certain specified disabilities.

• In addition, the book includes a complete list of VA facilities and

help to secure the information needed with VA applications.

"Even though the Congress and the various state legislatures have provided for money and services to be given to veterans and their dependents," Mr. Berko states, "unless the people know they are eligible and apply they will not collect anything. Especially, now that benefit eligibilities are probably going to be changed by Congress, it is important to apply and establish eligibility for benefits right now."

As Sen. Bob Dole, a decorated veteran and one familiar with the bureaucracy, says in his foreword, "Mr. Berko's book goes a long way in helping America's veterans cut through the red tape so they can receive the benefits they earned and deserve."

## Gender battle over remote control

Watching television is the dominant leisure activity shared by American couples, but that togetherness can turn sour with a click of the remote control if conflict arises over whether to watch "Oprah" or Atlanta Braves baseball.

Now a new study confirms what most of us have know all along - when it comes to the remote, men are almost in control.

The study by researchers at Oregon State University found that men are more likely to dominate use of the remote control, more likely to annoy their partners with its use, and more likely to "graze" - skipping from channel to channel in the endless pursuit of perfect television.

Women, on the other hand, are more apt to videotape their show to watch later and, on average, are more likely to say they are happy spending the time together as a couple, regard-

ing without talking to their partners," said Alexis Walker, a professor of human development and family sciences at OSU.

"It is," she added, "a display of

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-Alexis Walker,

a professor of human development and family sciences at OSU.

less of what is on television.

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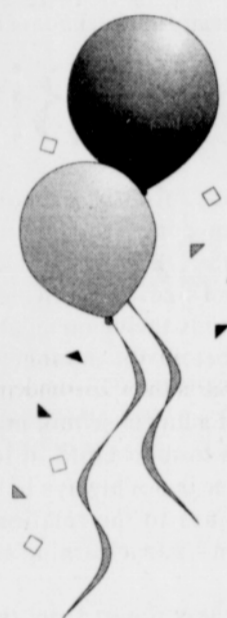
power. And it's annoying to the partner. Watching television is still a joint leisure activity, but with one person dominating the enjoyment. Men complain, too, but their com-

plaints are usually that the women is talking during a favorite show or that there isn't anything good on TV."

Walker first presented the findings of her study as the presidential address at the recent National Council on Family Relations annual meeting. Holder of the endowed Jo Anne Leonard Petersen Chair in Gerontology and Family Studies at OSU, Walker says she was surprised at how little academic research there was on the effect of television on relationships.

After delving into the topic, she found that the dynamics which shape societal attitudes and behaviors on gender relations are reflected in the television viewing habits of couples.

## Happy 92 Birthday



Born in 1904 Gladys Knauls is the Mother of six girls and one son. Gladys is celebrating her 92nd birthday, in San Jose Cal. along with Paul and Geneva Knauls, Jean Stewart Grand Daughter, Robin Carter and Great Grand Daughter Kassimira.

## Parents can help improve children's grades

The first report cards of the new school year are just around the corner. If grades need some work, parental support can make a difference.

"Providing structure and expressing interest may be the keys to im-

proving a child's grades," said Dr. Lou Ann Todd Mock, a psychologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

The first step: talk with the teacher and begin to implement changes at home.

One essential is adequate study space with good lighting and few distractions.

Mock also encourages parents to set a specific study time.

"Allow time for outside play or an after-school snack, but make televi-

sion off limits until after homework time," she said.

It might be necessary to sit with a young child just starting a homework routine, but pull back as soon as possible so children can learn to work independently.

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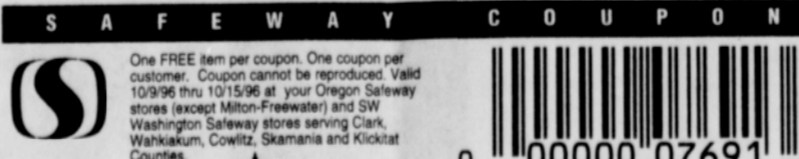
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