

At 88, her train's bound for Washington

By LYNN ORR

There isn't a train she wouldn't take, no matter where it's going, says Helen Cope.

And the figurative train is going to Washington, D.C. next spring where the 88-year-old Farmington Hills resident will spend two weeks as a congressional intern.

As far as she knows, she's the only Michigan person planning to take part in the senior citizen intern program, thanks to her daughter's prodding.

"My daughter kept writing me from Connecticut about the program through the American Association of Retired Persons, and that I should get into it," Mrs. Cope explains. After discovering her congressman wasn't interested, Mrs. Cope sent a copy of the program to Senator Robert Griffin's office along

with a letter expressing her interest. Griffin was interested, and Mrs. Cope now finds herself hoping the internship coincides with the cherry blossom festival, as well as giving her a better idea about legislation of interest to the elderly. She also has plans to work with senior citizens at Mercy Center on a consulting basis after the Washington internship.

"Perhaps I can listen to their problems and suggest solutions," says the former Detroit social worker. She's further preparing for consultation work by taking a course in income tax management through the American Association of Retired Persons, a group she particularly respects.

DISPENSE with the term senior citizen around Mrs. Cope. She's a

retired person, she maintains.

"I think it's rather a demeaning expression, you think of senior citizens as those people who go around just trying to fill in time—not taking part in anything themselves."

"But the AARP is really accomplishing something. They're politically active and that makes a difference."

Mrs. Cope is more than politically active—she's unable to count the number of air hours she's logged in her extensive travels to such exotic places as Tahiti, Australia, the Middle East, Alaska, Hawaii and Europe. And she comes by her wanderlust naturally.

"I think I got it from my father. He was a railroad man before he came to the University of Michigan and took up medicine," she explains. Both she and her late husband traveled extensively,

once spending three weeks on the ocean without seeing another ship.

Displayed prominently in her apartment living room is a map outlining "The Travels of Helen G. Cope," and the red lines crisscross the globe with one exception she's hoping to add in February.

"I'm finally going to South America, starting in Lima, Peru," says the sprightly woman, who may be traveling on her own for 12 days through Argentina, Chile and Brazil. Traveling is obviously her first love, although one daughter, three stepchildren, 12 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild keep her busy. As for the cookie-making grandmother role, she's not ready for it.

"I've done things for others for so many years that I want to do things for myself now," she says. As a social worker in Detroit from

1925-50, she's seen dramatic changes in the system, especially in the federal government's role, which is another reason why she remains politically active through the Women's Republican Association, she explains. She's also busy with the First Presbyterian Church of Farmington, the Friends of the Library, the Detroit Founder's Society and the Metropolitan Opera.

Last week on a particularly snowy day, she was preparing to go Christmas shopping. When it was suggested that it just might be a good day to stay inside, she immediately denounced the idea.

"A little snow doesn't bother me," she said.

Watch out, Washington, this is one retired person who isn't about to settle for lunch at the White House in place of hard legislation.



Helen Cope

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OCC schedules TV course

Television production classes will be held on Saturdays for the first time at the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College starting in January. The special all-morning Saturday offering is designed to make the college's full-credit broadcast production laboratory available to teachers, media specialists and others who work during the week.

Enrollment for COM 156, Broadcast Lab, is limited to 16 students. The

three-credit-hour class will meet from 9 a.m.-12 noon for 15 weeks beginning Jan. 14. The class will be conducted in the television studio on the Orchard Ridge Campus.

Students will learn basic non-engineering TV production skills as camera operators, floor managers, floor assistants, artists, audio operators, VTR operators, technical directors, directors, editors and producers. They also appear as air talent in class-generated exercises and productions.

"This is an experimental offering," says Ted Hancock, professor of communications, "that could lead to more weekend scheduling if the response is positive. We assume the Saturday class will attract adults in the community who have an interest in or involvement with media. But the class is also open to our regular students, so we don't know exactly what to expect."

REGISTRATION WILL BE HELD Jan. 14 with late registration through Jan. 13. For more information, call 476-9100.

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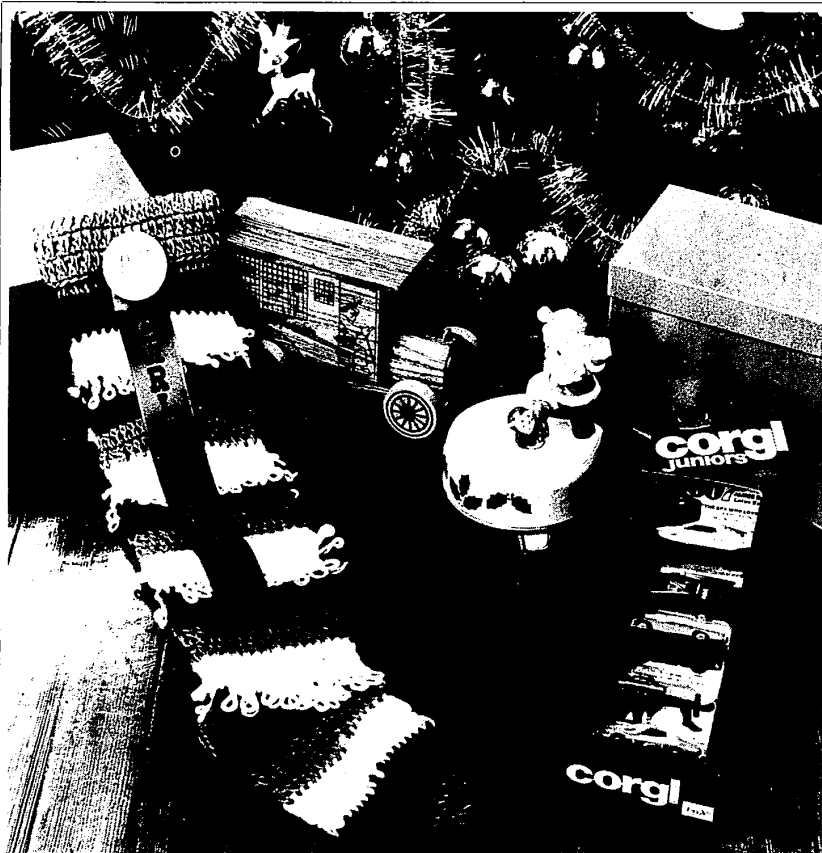
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Dial Santa

Once again Farmington residents have a direct line to Santa Claus at the North Pole.

Santa will be taking calls Monday through Friday, Dec 14 to 21, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. The number to call is 478-TOYS for this year's Santa Connection.



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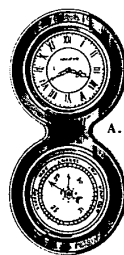
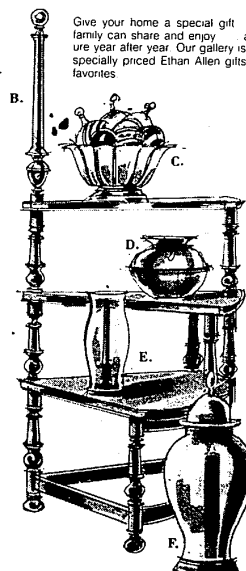
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