

Radiant bride is wed in wheel chair

By MARGARET MILLER

Cynthia Lentovich wasn't able to fulfill a dream of eight years, but it really didn't matter a bit when she became the bride of Tom Russette.

Although the Redford Township resident had been determined, ever since a trampo-

line fall in 1968 consigned her to life in a wheelchair, that on her wedding day she would at least walk up the church aisle to greet her bridegroom.

She took a few steps toward the altar of Unity Church of Livonia, but then faltered and went the rest of the way in her wheel-

chair. Then she stood beside Tom during part of the ceremony as they repeated their vows before the Rev. Gene Swensen. And no bride walking down the aisle could have been more radiant.

"SHE WASN'T at all upset," her mother, Genevieve Lentovich, said later. "She tried, she really tried. And she had

told us before to have her wheelchair handy."

After the wheelchair had been pushed back to the church entrance, she and her husband were ready for a ride to their reception in the Farmington Hills Knights of Columbus Hall in a vintage Ford restored by Cindy's brother, Mitchell.

Cindy's accomplishments leading up to her wedding day are the story of what determination can do to conquer adversity, and she expects to continue with an active life, combining the roles of student and homemaker and going on with a fight for a community that recognizes the rights of the handicapped.

A fall on a gymnastics trampoline when she was a senior at Clairmont High School put her in a hospital for five months. She realized in that period that her neck injury was permanent, but she started Schenck College a few months later. She earned an associate degree and began work at Redford Community Hospi-

tal's insurance office.

Now she is a student at Eastern Michigan University, planning to complete a degree in social work in December, 1977.

CINDY HAS BEEN ACTIVE in the Mobility Awareness Team, a group organized to help governments and people become more aware to the needs of the handicapped, and has participated in wheelchair sports, including javelin, discus and table tennis.

She also has taken a leadership role in the Coalition for Barrier-Free Design, and probably will be attending a meeting of that group in Lansing soon after she and Tom return from their Toronto and Niagara Falls honeymoon.

The couple chose Unity Church for their wedding because it has a short aisle and is equipped with ramps so friends in wheelchairs could attend.

Pushing that kind of planning in public buildings is one of the main purposes of

SHE AND TOM will live in a home so equipped because it formerly was occupied by the John Lentovich family. They met at a Halloween party last year.

"I went as the Jolly Green Giant and he wore my apron hat around," Cindy said. "After we got talking, we found we lived just two blocks apart in Redford Township."

The two are planning to give their own Halloween party this year. Tom is employed by Simon Sales Import Co. in Madison Heights.

The wedding reception featured a cake four feet long, two feet wide and five feet tall, fashioned by Richard Holway, a Northville baker who is a longtime friend of the Lentovich family.

Its decorations included a bride, a fountain and a doll cake for each of Cindy's six attendants.



Tom and Cindy Russette traveled to their wedding reception in a festooned 1941 Ford. Tom lifted Cindy out and set her in a wheelchair to go into the Farmington hall to greet guests. (Photo by Fred Hopkins)

Community Calendar

PLANT PARTY

Thursday, Aug. 5: Plant Party, sponsored by Women of Wayne, in Farmington Community Center, 7:30 p.m. Admission of \$1.25 asked at the door.

BACKYARD CARNIVAL

Friday and Saturday, Aug. 6-7: Carnival Against Dystrophy in the backyard of Steve Brynes, 3181 Lamar, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

PANTOMIME

Tuesday, Aug. 10: Pantomime classes start in the Farmington Community Center with Rachelle DeBly, member of the Mime Ensemble. Registrations are being taken now in the center.

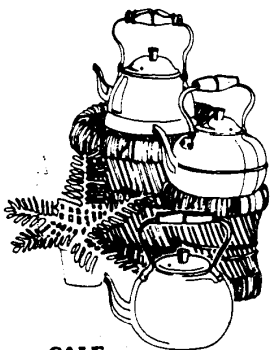
THE BOYS IN THE BAND

Friday and Saturday, Aug. 13-14: "The Boys in the Band," staged by the Farmington Players Summer Workshop, in Players Barn, on Twelve Mile between Orchard Lake and Farmington Road, 8:30 p.m. each evening. Play continues Aug. 16-17. Tickets available by calling 674-0710 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8-10 p.m.

Offers buffet

Buffet and entertainment every Friday evening is offered by the Feminist Women's City Club, 2118 Park, Detroit. Food and music will be available in the lounge on the second floor from 5-7 p.m.

The club also has business women's luncheon specials at \$2.25 every Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. It is located on the third floor of the club.



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