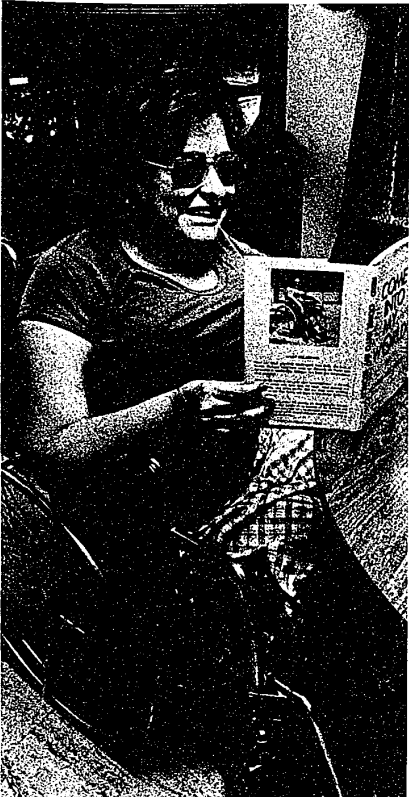


Poetry helps handicapped

View world from wheelchair

By SHERRY KAHAN



*I cannot help but wonder Why,
God put me in this chair of chrome.
I begin to smile, and then I sigh,
I'm here until he takes me home.*

In this poem, Carol Lee Reed of Garden City tries to rationalize the fate that placed her in a wheelchair for most of her 38 years. But in the end she decides:

*There is nothing much that I can do
But be happy, and understand
Someday my life will be anew,
With God I will walk hand in hand.*

The lines all come from a book written by Miss Reed and published this month by Carlton Press, Inc.

And the book, "Come Into My World," should no way be considered a railing against the disease that has atrophied her muscles, this writer stressed.

"I'm not angry," she declared. "Some handicapped are bitter. I never experienced this. I have lived with it all my life and have learned to accept the fact that I will always be handicapped. There are times I wished things were different, but it's a fact of life. You have to make the best of it."

"The highs and lows of life lived in a wheelchair are what Miss Reed's book is all about."

A former Farmington resident and graduate of Farmington High School, she said she had been considering the work "for quite a while."

"I thought there was a need for it," she explained.

SHE WANTS the public to know, for instance, that she managed to finish high school only because male students were thoughtful enough to carry her in her wheelchair up and down stairs between classes.

Army infantryman has new assignment

Specialist 4th Class Larry D. Clingan, son of Doyle D. Clingan of Farmington, recently was assigned as a unit clerk with the 6th Infantry in Berlin, Germany. Clingan entered the Army in May, 1977. His mother, Mrs. JoAnn VanName, lives in Detroit.

She thinks everyone should know that she can get into the Garden City City Hall and library, and the local movie theater and grocery stores, but that there are many restaurants that have steps and no ramps.

Recently Miss Reed and her mother, Carrie Reed, decided to try a restaurant in Wonderland Shopping Center only to find it had steps leading to the entrance.

A familiar anger warmed the wheelchair rider.

"I felt like sending my mother in and asking them why they would have a new restaurant and put in six or seven stairs and no ramp," she said. "It was a defeat. We had taken it for granted that because it was new it would be barrier-free."

She added that she would have liked to have been a professional singer, having sung all through high school.

"But I can't sing in a church choir because churches are inaccessible to someone in a wheelchair," she said.

WORST OF ALL for her is the problem of rest rooms. On this subject she feels the lobby for the handicapped ought to fix its muscles. Few rest rooms are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair, or a person carrying the handicapped individual. "I can go into Kmart, but I can't get in the restroom," she explained.

It's not hard to empathize with this woman, who had to wait 10 hours between toilets once on an airplane trip to California.

"It was pure misery," she recalled.

Another difficulty for her is transportation. Neither she or her mother drive, so when you come into Miss

(Continued on page 6A)

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Carol Reed looks over the recently published book in which she depicts life from a wheelchair. (Staff photo by Bob Woodring)

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