

The Gathering Place Seniors study the humanities

By LORRAINE McCLISH

A something-new in The Gathering place this spring is the humanities class which has run just enough sessions to date to make the class instructor sure "that it's going to fan out in all directions."

Joan Crane leads the Senior Center Humanities Program that comes from the National Council on Aging. She is a therapist for older adults with Catholic Social Services based in Farmington Hills and a member of Farmington Area Commission on Aging.

"My job fits me in with The Gathering Place through OLSHA (Oakland-Livingston Human Service Agency) and the Area Agency on Aging, so it all dovetails very well," she said.

"Then too, working with this class every week helps me get better acquainted with the people I'm representing on the commission. One facet helps compliment the others."

THE HUMANITIES class is run similar in several respects to the Great Books discussion groups, where homework is assigned in the form of reading materials. Then that reading is discussed in an informal setting, yet structured by the discussion leader.

The two-part thrust behind the program is that the humanities have particular relevance for older adults, and conversely, that they can make a special contribution to the humanities through literature, history and philosophy.

The readings aim to stimulate the quest for self-discovery.

This in turn enables the participants to realize they are vast repositories of culture from their experiences and accomplishments.

"The classes (here) are doing just exactly that. That was evident right from the beginning," Mrs. Crane said, adding that she hoped to lure six into her first class but attracted 12.

"Twelve is just about right. I don't

want to see it get any larger, because that could cut down on individual input," she said.

Of the 12, she has several foreign-born and "about as wide a variety of backgrounds as you could get from people who have so much to offer, so much to share, so many memories. It is a joy for me to see them interacting as they do, sharing life experiences."

THE FOCUS for the group is on families this time around.

"And that is a good place to start," Mrs. Crane said, "with families meaning so many different things to different people. (Henry David) Thoreau certainly thought of a family in a different way than (Wyatt) Cooper did, and every one in the group approaches the author's View from their own experience."

All of the readings are excerpts from well-known novelists, poets, playwrights, biographers, historians and philosophers works.

No one is excluded, because all of the materials come with tapes. Further, the program is flexible, so easy adaptation can be made by the instructor for the well or the frail, the educated or uneducated.

The materials, including the tapes, were obtained through Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department for a donation to the National Council on the Aging. Participants may keep their class reading materials.

FROM HER first class of 12, Mrs. Crane will invite volunteers to take a leadership training workshop at the close of the eight-week session, "and from there there is no limit of where it can spread."

"I can visualize classes being held in nursing homes, churches, even two or three going on at one time in The Gathering Place. We know it is worth our while," she said.

Because of Mrs. Crane's job and her work on the commission, she is recipient of a great deal of literature concerning classes, programs and projects for older adults.

She chose to initiate the humanities classes here because of the program's proven success in senior centers, nutrition sites, and housing complexes throughout the country.

Four study units are being used now in about 600 sites in 46 states. Four more units are in the process of being prepared.

"It promotes (the participants) well being and mental health. It gets them out and gets them talking," Mrs. Crane said.

Mrs. Crane, who began college as an art major at Michigan State University, went back to school in 1967 to get a degree in gerontology from Madonna College.

She is now doing graduate work in gerontology at Eastern Michigan University.



Joan Crane leads the humanities classes which enable the participants to realize they are repositories of culture, stemming from their own experiences and accomplishments. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)†



The round-table discussion participants make up the first class of the Senior Center Humanities Program given in the Farmington area. Discussion leader Joan Crane (fourth from left) is certain that

leaders will come from this group of 12 to begin new classes wherever senior adults gather. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

May is Senior Adult Month

Regulars at The Gathering Place lead off their celebration of Senior Adult Month with voting for Farmington area's most beautiful baby in the contest sponsored by Farmington Area Jaycees.

All senior adults who visit The Gathering Place Thursday or Friday, May 1-2, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. have one vote.

Meanwhile, the Farmington Steppers, the dance and chorus line that has made itself a name by showing other seniors how to keep in shape, will do just that again in a demonstration during a conference in Schoolcraft College, May 1.

"Musical Madness," the Gathering Place's first full scale production, staged last fall, is repeated for busloads of guests coming from other centers throughout the metropolitan area

Saturday, May 3. On Tuesday, May 6, senior adults travel to Shawasssee Center for the new Retirement Series that comes from Oakland University's Continuum Center.

On Friday, May 9, the bus leaves for a weekend trip to Toronto, and on Wednesday, May 14, the bus leaves for Lansing and participation in Senior Power Day.

Senior adults treat themselves to a dinner dance on Friday, May 23, in The Gathering Place, then dig in their heels to ready for their end of the month Spring Arts and Crafts Show and Sale.

The show runs throughout regular hours in The Gathering Place, in Mercy Center. Guests are asked to enter from Gate 4, on 11 Mile Road, east of Middlebelt Road. Admission is without charge.

People Day honors human achievement



The flowering of human thought and action is the focal point of Humanistic Indivism, founded by Rabbi Sherwin Wine of Birmingham Temple. People Day is initiated this week as a festive time to celebrate humanness.

Members of three Universalist-Unitarian (U-U) churches join the congregation from Birmingham Temple in celebrating a new holiday honoring human inspiration and accomplishment.

"People Day" celebration begins at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 30 in Birmingham Temple, 28611 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills.

The holiday is the creation of Sherwin Wine, spiritual leader of the temple, as an alternative to May Day.

"People Day is our way of using an old human holiday for humanistic purposes," he said. The day honors the great men and women of all nations and all cultures who improved the human condition by their lives and work.

In commemoration to human achievement, a special tribute to John Dewey, given in the form of a dramatization and written by Marilyn Rowens, will commence the evening activities. The talent for the performance will be drawn from the temple, Birmingham, Grosse Pointe and Farmington U-U churches.

In addition, there will be an Anthropoe, a display of portraits, information and bibliographies on other great human personalities.

The event is a first for the temple's congregation, bringing together humanists of various backgrounds for a holiday, rather than a meeting.

The celebration is open to all interested persons, without charge.

ERAmerica chairman spells out ratification importance

The Farmington Branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW) will host Laura Callow, co-chairperson for ERAmerica in Michigan, at 8 p.m. Tuesday in First Presbyterian Church of Farmington's fellowship hall on Farmington and 11 Mile roads.

Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) remains a top priority for AAUW. The group hosts Ms. Callow in the hope that the community at large will become knowledgeable on the importance of the ERA and its ratification.

The national AAUW is now in the process of accelerating its thrust for ratification because there are only 880 days left in which to do it. Deadline is June 30, 1982.

At the present time, 35 states have ratified ERA. Ms. Callow became active in the women's move-

ment in 1972 over an issue of credit. She has since been speaking publicly on goals of the movements and has received numerous awards for her efforts.

She is recipient of "Women Helping Women Award" from Seropoints International of Livonia and the Alice Paul Award from the Metro Chapter of National Organization for Women (NOW).

She holds the "Slate to Women Award" from American Association of University Women in Livonia and "The Tribute to Women Award" from National Federation of Business and Professional Women.

Ms. Callow teaches adult education in Livonia and is a past president of League of Women Voters and a member of Women's Advisory Committee, Schoolcraft Community College.



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