

Beverly woman learns to live all over again

By ALICE COLLINS

Jean Werner-Beland, associate professor of nursing at Wayne State University and a resident of Beverly Hills, has been selected an Outstanding Handicapped Citizen of the Year by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

"There are a lot of handicapped persons in the area who deserve to receive it, my husband for one," Ms. Werner-Beland said in an interview this week. "Many are doing fantastic jobs. I was just lucky to have my boss nominate me."

Eleven years ago, after one year of teaching at Wayne State, she was driving to a convention in Chicago when she was seriously injured in an automobile accident. It left her permanently handicapped, never to walk without crutches again.

After seven months of hospitalization and rehabilitation, she was ready to go on with her life. She was able to resume her career without problems.

"What I found out, and what others who become handicapped in adult life suddenly find out, is that on the social scene people no longer treat you like they did before," said Ms. Werner-Beland. "People who are less than perfect in our society are frightening to those who are able bodied."

"IN THE BEGINNING, I'd go shop-

ping with a friend," she said, "and discovered clerks wouldn't talk to me. They'd ask my companion, 'Does she want to buy that dress? What size does she wear?' They'd act like I was blind and deaf, like I had no self, like I wasn't even there."

"It isn't funny, but I guess it's laughable in a way. 'I realized,' said Ms. Werner-Beland, "they just wouldn't deal with me as long as there was an able-bodied person with me. That's when I decided I would have to go alone and force them to deal with me."

Something she discovered herself and she now passes on to others is: "Handicapped people have a tremendous responsibility to educate other people on how to live with us."

"Those who don't assume that responsibility just stay angry all the time. And that's doing themselves a disservice."

IRONICALLY, Ms. Werner-Beland's education and training helped prepare her for the handicap she was to face. She began her nursing career in orthopedics.

"I often worked with handicapped people," she said. "And one of the reasons I went on into psychiatric nursing was that I didn't know what best to do with the people with handicaps."

"My friends and colleagues also helped me. With so many of them psy-

chiatric nurses and psychiatrists, they won't let you get away with anything. When I'd start feeling sorry for myself, they'd say, 'Hey, you've got a lot on the ball, start using it.'"

Handicapped people have it better today than used to be the case, she said. Because of the barrier-free-design law, "there are so many more places we can go now. In addition to shopping, there are restaurants and theaters. It adds a whole new dimension to the quality of life."

"Of course, we still have to check on a place before we go for the first time to see if we can get around."

AN EXCEPTION to new places that are easily accessible for the handicapped is the Renaissance Center, "It's possible to get around in Ren Cen," she said, "but it's very difficult. You have to go through kitchens and on freight

elevators, it's such a mess." More handicapped people being out in public helps to educate the able-bodied about the handicapped, she said. The attitudes of clerks is beginning to change, she said.

Five years ago Jean Werner married Ralph Beland, an accountant with the Health Care Institute, which is associated with Wayne State University. Beland, a victim of polio when he was a young man, is confined to a wheelchair.

"We have a very good marriage," said Ms. Werner-Beland, "and we're also good friends." Together they take care of their Beverly Hills home, lawn and gardening.

"We have someone come in to do the vacuuming and other heavy stuff once every other week," she said. "The rest we handle ourselves."

MS. ERNER-BELAND'S award was

given "in recognition of her outstanding accomplishments for her community and her efforts to overcome the effects of her handicap," according to the plaque presented by Dean Lorene Fischer of the Wayne State College of Nursing at a recent ceremony.

Ms. Werner-Beland was previously named Professional Handicapped Woman of the Year in Southeastern Oakland County by the Pilots Club of Birmingham.

She received her certificate in nursing from Seattle University in 1952, a master's in nursing from the University of Washington in 1959 and is working toward a doctorate at Wayne State.

She is widely published in the field of psychiatric nursing. She edited and contributed three chapters to a book that will be published next month. It is titled "Grief Responses to Long-Term Illness and Disability."

AS CHAIRPERSON of the Division of Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing of the Michigan Nurses Association, Ms. Werner-Beland travels a great deal between here and Lansing. "I gave up driving for about five years after the accident," she said, "I was just chicken."

"But I finally decided it was too great an inconvenience having others drive me around. Driving doesn't bother me at all now."

At the present time, she's busy preparing for a project at Wayne State for master's level psychiatric nursing into public mental health. Ms. Werner-Beland is director of the training project.

Psychologist talks on cult movement

Clinical psychologist Dr. Margaret Thaler Singer discusses "Why Cults Today?" at 8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 3, at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, 1250 Kensington Road, Bloomfield Hills.

Dr. Singer has established a reputation as being the foremost expert in the study of coercive control of individuals and groups. She will discuss the cult problem in general, giving the historical background of modern day cults which are not a new phenomena.

She has counseled young people who have left cults and her research also includes the study of POW's returning from Southeast Asia and victims of concentration camps.

Dr. Singer testified for the defense in the Patty Hearst trial and has studied members of the People's Temple cult and survivors of the Jonestown catastrophe.

She has received research awards in the mental health field and serves on the editorial boards of four professional journals. She holds appointments in the psychiatry department at the University of California's San Francisco Medical School and in the psychology department at the University of California at Berkeley.

Admission is \$2.50 per person with reduced prices for families. For reservations, call 646-4381 or 642-6923.

St. John's Guild sets dinner dance plans

The Women's Guild of St. John's Armenian Church presents their annual "Tis the Season" dinner dance on Saturday, Dec. 1.

The event will take place at the Armenian Cultural Hall, 22001 Northwestern in Southfield. Entertainment will include "Hachig Kazharian Ensemble" and "Royce" bands.

Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will be served at 7 and dinner at 8 p.m.

Chairwoman for the affair is Mrs. Richard Baylejian of Lathrup Village. She is assisted by Mrs. Andy Tarpinian and Mrs. Jack Kojmanian.

For further information or reservations call Mrs. Roy Kahakian at 557-9035.

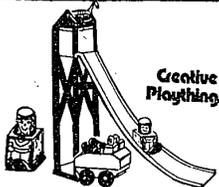
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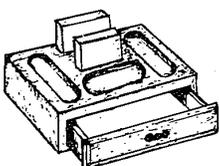
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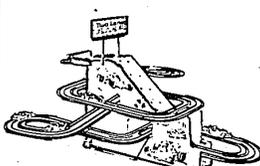
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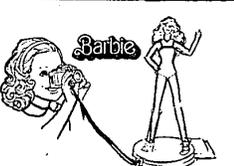
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