

# She Got On Welfare And Can't Get Off

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Welfare costs have ballooned in Michigan in recent years. In this article, the second of two, a team of five Michigan State University journalism students takes a look at the program of Aid to Families of Dependent Children. The authors are Rhonda Weiss, Paula Johnson, Laurel Hoag, Valerie Thomas and Charles Nami.

Bonnie M. sits on a faded red couch, surrounded by piles of clean laundry which she folds.

Dolls, trucks, pieces of a tinker toy set, a baby blanket and plastic plates and cups

litter the floor of the small living room.

The windows are open, and the radio next door blares rock music. The television, constantly in use, sobs out a soap opera, and Bonnie, in a faded green maternity shift, talks. Bonnie is 24, the mother of two children, eight and five.

She doesn't know her husband's address, but she's sure it's not too far away. He drops in every couple of weeks.

"HE DON'T have a job," she said. "I mean, not steady. I don't know where he gets money to live, and he don't give us none."

Bonnie doesn't work; she has no marketable skills. She dropped out of high school at 16 to marry and have her first child. For the first three years, things were fine.

After the birth of the baby, Bonnie got a job as a motel maid. Her husband worked for the school system as a janitor.

"I left little Clifford with my mama during the day," she said. "We wanted to buy us a house—you know, live nice."

Bonnie didn't like the work, but she was willing to work for what she wanted. Her husband was not so responsible. He began staying out late, drinking and gambling and missing work. Her second baby, a little girl, was born three years after her first baby.

"After Odette was born, my husband just got worse,"

Bonnie said. "He got worse, and then he just up and left; he told me he couldn't take it no more."

BONNIE'S MOTHER had died, and when her husband deserted her, she was forced to give up her job and stay home with her children. She was able to live for four months on money she had saved for the new house. When her son contracted pneumonia, she had no money for doctor bills. A neighbor told her about welfare.

"I just had to go down and get on the welfare," she said. "We always been a proud family—I didn't want to do it—but my baby was sick. I just

ain't been able to get off since."

Bonnie feels that she has been treated well by the system, the knows that without AFDC aid, her son might have died, but she hates it.

"I sometimes just don't know what to do. I scribble to get all that money together for my food stamps, but it ain't always easy, and I always feel like people's looking at me funny in the store when I pull them out. I always worked hard and I ain't shiftless, but I can't leave my babies and I don't have no money," she said.

"And," she added

thoughtfully, "I just don't see how I'm ever gonna get none, not while my babies need me."

BONNIE'S daughter is now five and next year will be attending school full time. It will then be easier for her to work if she can find a job and if she can arrange for her children to be cared for after school hours.

Mrs. Doris Sand, information and program referral director in social services, said that if the person is employable the purpose of the system is to get him a job.

"We are trying to upgrade the whole family so at some

point they become self-supporting," she said. "If Bonnie is employed, the state will pay for a licensed sitter for her children, because day care facilities are not plentiful in this area."

BONNIE'S LACK of marketable skills will not be an overwhelming handicap. The federal government requires each state to set up a program called New Careers. Under this program, welfare recipients like Bonnie are employed by the Social Services agencies in a clerical capacity.

The program frees professional social workers

from masses of paper work, leaving them free to concentrate on counseling and group services, while providing jobs and training people like Bonnie.

The Social Services department is currently analyzing all jobs and outlining a job ladder. Clients will be employed to work at the lowest level, receive training and work themselves up the steps of the ladder.

It is this program, with its provisions for employment, which is the hope of the system. It is a solid attempt to break the vicious "welfare cycle."

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**RONALD F. NOWAK** of Troy has been promoted from branch officer to second vice president by Manufacturers National Bank of Detroit and will continue at the Farmington office, at Farmington Rd. and Eight Mile.



**RICHARD O. FINE** of 29541 Gramercy Ct., Farmington, has been promoted to second vice president and loan officer of Manufacturers National Bank of Detroit. He is in the bank's commercial loan field in the metropolitan area.

## What Are Chances Of Hepatitis?

Questions should be sent to the Community Commission on Drug Abuse, P.O. Box 280, Livonia, Mich. 48151.

Q. Your column mentioned something recently about drug addicts who had gotten hepatitis. Is it responsible for a lot of this disease in people who get blood by transfusion by way of commercial blood banks. How much more likely is this to happen than if you receive blood from a friend or relative who donates it? T.L., Livonia

A. If we understand your question correctly, the answer is as follows: According to the most recent report the incidence of hepatitis virus in "commercial" blood is 12 times as high as in donated blood; 1.2 per cent as against 0.1 per cent. Both percentages seem low, but multiplied by hundreds of thousands of transfusions the number of individuals affected is considerable.

Q...Is it true that in withdrawal from narcotics addition the symptoms are just the reverse of those produced by the drug? R.R., Westland

A. This isn't true in absolutely every respect. But it is true in a number of ways. Perhaps the most striking is the fact that heroin and other narcotics cause a certain amount of paralysis of the bowel; in withdrawal stomach cramps and diarrhea are one of the most common problems that occur.

Q...I've heard a number of references to quinine in drugs that are abused. Can you get high from quinine? Is it addicting? R.S., Westland

A. Quinine is a drug whose primary use is in treatment of malaria. It shows up very frequently in samples of "street" narcotics for the

However, as with any other drug, it does have some danger for certain people, especially when injected. There have been reports of severe, sometimes fatal, hypersensitivity reactions with narcotics users because of the addition of the drug, quinine.

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