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Magazine

The Christian soldier's story



Sandy Snelson, a major in the Salvation Army, bows her head in prayer at the annual dinner meeting of the Home League, the church's women's club. She and her husband, Major James Snelson serve in Bowling Green's Army station.

John Snelson lies on one of the front pews of the Salvation Army church with the Sunday evening sun slanting in, waiting for church to start.

His mother Sandy Snelson walks by, pigeon-like in her Army officer's uniform, and says, "Come on, John. Wake up." She hands him a French horn. Reluctantly, the 15-year-old pulls himself off the pew and joins the brass band at the front of church.

During the testimony and favorite song section of the service, the sweat-soaked boy shows more life, rising to say, "I'm glad the Lord loves me. I'm thankful for all the things he's done for me. And I'm glad I'm a Christian."

About an hour later in a corps cadets Bible study, he joins other young people in discussing the Christian idea of turning the other cheek.

"Have you ever been hit before?" asked the group's leader Richard White.

"Once or twice, yeah," John answered.

"What did you do?"

"I hit 'em back," John answered. Then the rather short boy laughed. "It depends on how big they are, whether you turn the other cheek or not."

As the sons of Salvation Army officers, Robert, 12, and John are Army-brats of a different sort, and their parents are soldiers of a different stripe. James and Sandy Snelson are majors and ordained ministers in the Salvation Army, a religious, charitable organization run along military lines.

That means the Snelsons move a lot. John has lived in four states, Robert in three. "When you start school, it's pretty bad for the first year," John said. "But then it's OK."

And whenever they go to a new town, an explanation automatically follows. "People understand that you (the Salvation Army) give food to poor people, but they don't really understand the church," John said.

"I usually tell them the church is sort of like the Methodists. I get tired of explaining what it is."

After three years in Bowling Green, they feel more at home. Both play soccer, play in the school and Army bands and are in a program for gifted students at their schools. But even after three years, "I feel like I'm part of somewhere else and part of here," John said.

Their parents try not to overdose them with Army life. "We don't force them to come during the week if they don't want to," Mrs. Snelson said.

Officership is a religious calling, Major Snelson said, and "I would never force them to go in that direction."

But the boys help out by packing food boxes, ringing bells during the Christmas appeal, going to nursing homes and playing in the brass band, which is part of all Salvation Army churches.

"It's pretty fun," Robert said. "We got to go to this jail in Tiptonville, Tenn., in the middle of nowhere."

Because the Salvation Army was created

See TALK, Page 4

Story by Leigh Ann Eagleston
Photos by Jason Hallmark



Riding the rails of train history

James Brown well remembers the day the last passenger train pulled out of Bowling Green.

On Oct. 7, 1979, Brown, his two children and a friend watched the train arrive at 6:33 p.m. — on time. He recorded the end of an era with a tape recorder and a camera as he watched a couple of people step off the train.

"It broke my heart that after 120 years (of passenger service) nobody was there to see it. Nobody cared," said the assistant professor of theater. Brown has been fascinated with trains since childhood.

The rails came to Bowling Green in the 1850s. The Bowling Green-Tennessee Railroad company and the Louisville and Nashville Railroad company each received charters for railroads March 5, 1850. Two years later, the companies merged. By the 1920s, as many as 27 passenger trains a day traveled through Bowling Green.

Today, trains still whistle through Bowling Green, but they carry coal, grain, automobiles, building materials and machinery instead of people. The trains rumble by the abandoned passenger depot at Kentucky and Sixth streets that once bustled with passengers and townsfolk.

D.J. Lashlee, a conductor who retired in December after 39 years with the railroad, recollected that the depot was open 24 hours a day, and "a lot of people would sit there and watch trains come, and sit and talk."

The station, with an assessed value of \$290,000, is for sale now. Realtor John Perkins said someone is looking to buy and restore it, but declined to be more specific.

Former railroaders and railroad buffs fondly recall the days of passenger trains, but say that their demise hasn't hurt the community.

Lashlee, 60, sold the last ticket for the last passenger train between Louisville and Nashville. Most of the passengers were rail fans, "and they got emotional," he said.

"The employees were sad to see them (passenger trains) go," Lashlee said. "It was a part of life that wouldn't be anymore." Still, he said he can't see that the end of the service hurt the industry because freight business picked up.

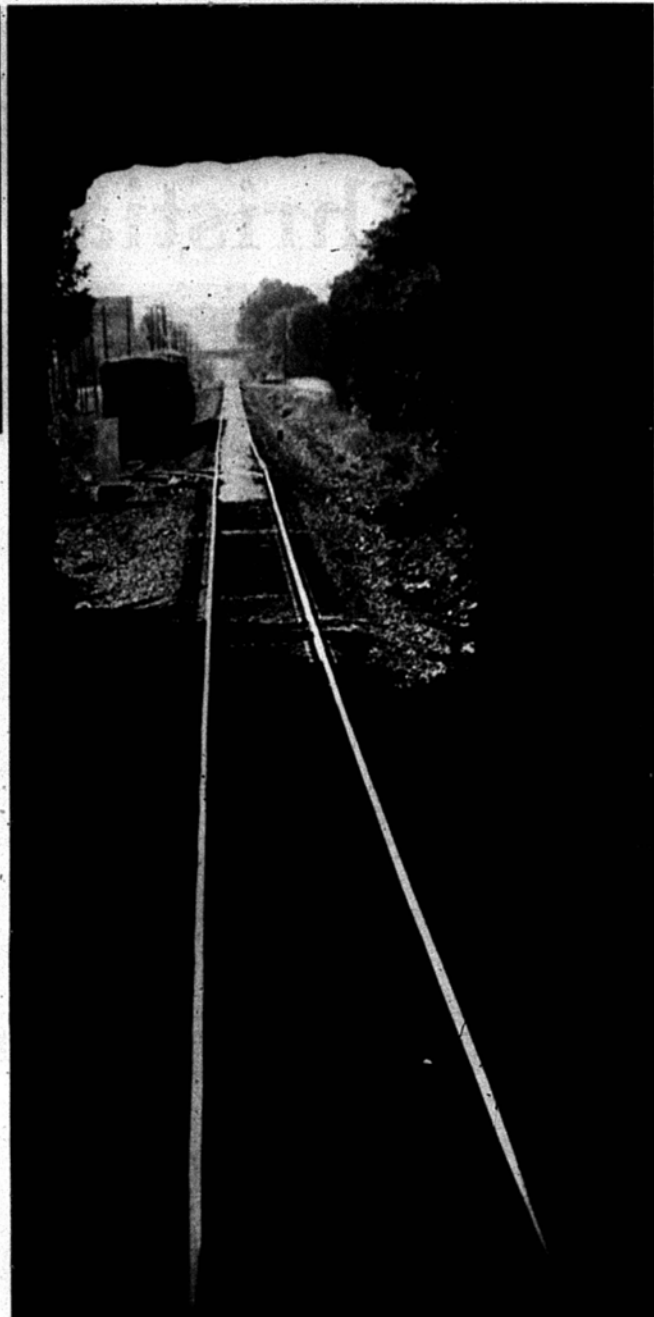
Times got tough in 1957, when L & N removed two trains from service because of a decline in passengers, leaving four daily passenger trains running north and south.

Three years later, L & N asked the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to remove two more passenger trains, called the Memphis branch Pan Americans, because business slipped further. According to an article in the June 9, 1960, Park City Daily News, the company attributed the decline to automobile traffic increased by improved roads.

It was the Pan Ams that Josephine Manthie, former society editor for the Daily News, frequently rode.

She recalled one local engineer, known as Dynamite Dan, who "could leave here 20 minutes late and roll into Memphis ahead of time."

When she'd board the train for Memphis, many of the passengers from Louisville would be curled up in the seats asleep. "I'd



CSX train SCN 571 goes through a tunnel between Cave City and Franklin. The mile-and-a-half-long train originated in Cincinnati and was heading for New Orleans. At the old depot at Kentucky and Sixth streets (above left), passengers don't fill the cavernous building.

See RAILROAD, Page 8

Story by Lisa Jessie • Photos by Omar Tatum

Magazine

1 'Lord's Army'

They don't just ring bells at Christmas. The Salvation Army is a highly organized, dedicated group with officers worldwide. Story by Leigh Ann Eggleston. Photos by Jason Hallmark.

2 Making tracks

The passenger train's glory may have been replaced by progress. But the memories linger on. Story by Lisa Jessie. Photos by Omar Tatum.

3 Living, learning

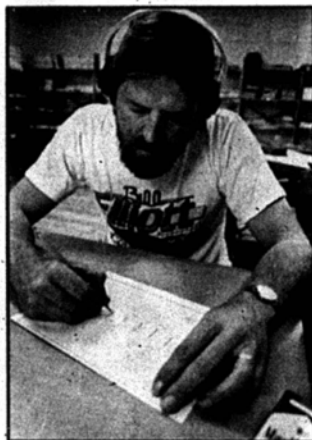
It's never too late to learn to read, write or improve other skills at the Adult Learning Center. Story by Darla Carter. Photos by Randy Greenwell.

6 Taking care

Alzheimer's disease, a dementing illness, is the fourth largest killer of the elderly. There is no cure, so families and victims take care of one another. Story by Ann Schlagenhaut. Photos by Rob Hatcher.

Rex Perry
Photo editor

Leigh Ann Eggleston
Magazine editor



Right, Bowling Green residents Danny Dillon and Jesse Boyd work to get their high school equivalency diplomas. They often spend the day there. Above, Bowling Green resident Steve Upton studies spelling two nights a week so he can move up in his workplace.



Adults learn to catch up at center

To the newcomer, late afternoon sunshine dancing through the windows of the building at 877 11th St. appears to be the quiet building's only occupant.

The squeak of a door imposes on the static environment within. All is quiet here, for the wheels of the mind turn in silence.

This building is the home base of the Adult Learning Center, a place for students at the other end of the spectrum from those who occupied the building when it was an elementary school.

"This is like a one-room schoolhouse," said director and teacher George Esters, "and we build it with people from 18 to 80."

The students show signs of modern problems. They are pregnant teen-agers, high school students on suspension, dropouts and the functionally illiterate.

After taking a pre-test to determine education level, students go on to complete exercises in math, English, social studies and science. Some just want to read and write better. Others want to go on to vocational school or college. Most want to get their high school equivalency diploma (GED).

The center has a 99 percent success rate, Esters said. Eight hundred students have gone on to get GEDs, and 700 have obtained high school credits while pregnant or suspended and have graduated from high school.

The center's hodge-podge of students study in an adjacent set of rooms off the center's middle corridor.

In one room is a long section of computer terminals near a myriad of child-size tables, surrounded by six plastic chairs. A ruddy-complexioned man of 20 sits at one. Wrinkles appear on his forehead and at the corners of his gray-blue eyes as he ponders basic English exercises printed on ditto sheets.

"I spend about an hour and half a day here," said William Harrington in a thick New York accent. "As I kick in, I'll spend about 3 hours (a day)."

Harrington, who wants to get his GED, has been a student at the center for two

weeks. He signed up for instruction there on his third day in Bowling Green after getting a job at a nearby Burger King.

"They (the teachers) told me I didn't have to come at all," Harrington said, "but you've got to do something to occupy your time. You know, maybe even learn something."

He was told he didn't have to come because the center has a policy that students may come and go as they please.

"It's up to you whether you make something of yourself or not," Harrington said.

Instruction at the center is one-on-one. "We just provide assistance," said instructor Mary Ford. "We help them when they get stuck. Otherwise, it's individualized."

Individualized attention is "how we build a personal trust," Esters said.

And instant feedback is the key to students' success at the center. "They can immediately see what they did right and what they need to work on."

Instructors, who are all Kentucky certified teachers, sit at desks or tables in the same room as the students. When a student has a problem they may come over to their table for a few seconds or actually sit down and read or work with them.

The lower level students begin by working on grade-school exercises. Those on a higher grade level may start with exercises on computers or educational videos.

Each student is tested periodically to see how they have progressed, Esters said. Since each one has his own independent study program, the time between when a student enters the Adult Learning Center and leaves it for good varies.

"I've had students here from two months to two years," Esters said.

Low educational achievement is the reason why many people are stuck in low paying jobs or dependent on welfare or other social aid programs, Esters said.

Only two of three Kentucky adults have better than an eighth-grade education, according to the 1980 census.

But places like the Adult Learning Center are trying to turn things around. Last year, 31,000 former dropouts attended programs to work toward completing their high school studies. From 1985 to 1988 the number of people who attained their GED jumped from 10,000 to 14,800.

People with a low educational attainment are "humble," Esters said. "They don't want people to know they can barely read or that they don't have a high school diploma."

It's the center's job to build their self-esteem and get them past obstacles that have held them back.

Harrington, who is a high school dropout, is trying to overcome his background as a truant. The Marlboro cigarettes peeking from the pocket of his gold and navy-striped shirt are a reminder of the times he got suspended for smoking and other code violations from Roosevelt High School in New York City and Warren East High School in Bowling Green.

During high school, he moved between Bowling Green and New York because of family problems he won't discuss.

"I always had food in my stomach, but I felt like a refugee," Harrington said. "I didn't know where I was going to wake up in the morning."

Harrington said he had a hard time adjusting to Warren East because it was so different from Roosevelt and because he was 19, older than most high school students.

"The school up there was a lot bigger, and it really wasn't a good place to learn being that a lot of my friends were there," Harrington said. His friends "cut class, partied."

"But down here everything was like for little kids; they even had a paddle in the principal's office," he said.

"I thought I was in Andy Griffith town or something."

Despite pleas from school officials to stay in high school, Harrington dropped out in

the 12th grade. "Like a jerk I got a job for \$30 a week as a food distributor," Harrington said.

Harrington tried to learn on his own, he said. He improved his vocabulary by watching the television shows "Cheers," "Star Trek" and the "Odd Couple." "I listened to what Felix Unger, Doctor Spock and Diane Chambers said, looked the words up and used them."

But he wasn't happy. "I wanted to get my GED," he said. "I wanted to get my (driver's) license, maybe go in the service."

Though Harrington tries hard at the center, he still has problems with subjects such as math — algebra in particular.

"I never got to that," he said.

Esters, 47, who obtained his master's degree from Western and will complete his 25th year of teaching this year, said he left a job in the Bowling Green City school system because he wanted to help people like Harrington but felt that he couldn't in a crowded classroom.

He came to the center in 1971, one year after it was established as part of the Manpower Vocational Act in 1970.

Being a teacher at the center provides a different type of reward, Esters said. "You get immediate gratification," he said. "You don't have to wait for years for the student to come back and tell you how beneficial you were."

"You can see the contentment, the self-esteem, the self-assurance growing within the adult that comes here," Esters said.

Harrington said he's taking his studies "gradually."

He said if he gets his GED then he can realize his dream of getting a job where he can see the country.

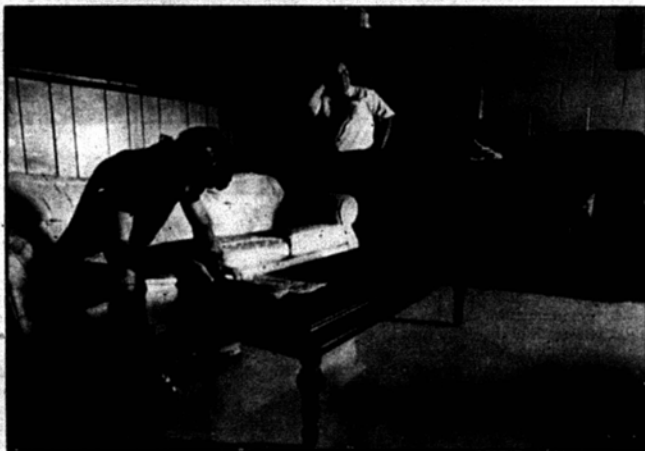
"I don't want to be in the House of Representatives," he said. "I just want something decent, something with security to take care of my family if I decide to have one, something to take care of me in 20 years."



Dressed in regulation blue, the Snelsons lead the congregation in singing hymns one Sunday morning.



Johnny Brody, 5, runs from pre-release prisoner Tracy Kirby as he wrestles with lodge supervisor Richard White.



Major Snelson looks on in the lodge as pre-release prisoner Tracy Kirby checks the newspaper for jobs.

Talk, action mix in military ministry

Continued from Page One

to minister to the disadvantaged, it tends to cater to low-income people, and the buildings are usually in poorer areas of cities.

The local station offers overnight transient lodging, a soup kitchen during the winter and a pre-release program for prisoners to help them readjust to community life. That's aside from regular church activities and different programs offering financial aid to the needy.

A man who stayed in the transient lodge at one of the Snelsons' previous stations became a jack-of-all-trades and worked for them at three stations, Mrs. Snelson said. Although he was an alcoholic, Cliff cooked, repaired things and even "kept John when Robert was born before Mother got home," she said.

The boys have played soccer and basketball with the transients or prisoners, but John finds it harder to relate to some people at the Army. "People at school seem smarter. Some people down here don't know how to read," he said.

"Some of these people, I don't know why, they just get on my nerves." Despite these differences, growing up in the Salvation Army makes it grow on you, the Snelsons said. And their children are no exception. Among other brass instruments, the Snelsons have an old bugle, and the boys "have been blowing right ever since they were about 18 months old," Mrs. Snelson said.

As a toddler, John would play Army by

loading his toy truck with things from a trash can and pretending he was making pick-ups as his parents did in picking up donated items.

Still, neither Robert nor John know yet if they want to make the Army their career. John said he's thinking about engineering.

Sitting and smoking moodily in the Army's Red Shield lodge, Tracy Kirby is thinking about being an auto mechanic. The 19-year-old from Butler County has at least three more months to think about it as he serves his time in the pre-release program for federal prisoners offered through the Army.

The program requires the prisoners to get a job. So Kirby works at a car wash. "If it's raining, I don't work. If it isn't, I do. That's the only thing I hate," Kirby said, stubbing out his cigarette.

When he's not working, the short, slight young man sits in the lounge, watching television. Fish tanks, a desk and a Coke machine give the room a doctor's office feel. But clashing couches and a black reclining chair with a ryo in the seat make it look more like a basement den.

The prisoners can come and go as they wish. But they have to sign in and out and adhere to an 8 p.m. curfew. Kirby especially likes the pre-release program because it allows him to go home each weekend. His 18-year-old brother just got married. Another brother, 21, is in jail, and his 10-

year-old brother lives at home.

Although the pre-release program is "just another process I have to go through," Kirby said it has helped him get a job, and he has opened his first savings account.

But "I don't ever go over for church or nothing," Kirby said, looking with marble-blue eyes at the church across the parking lot.

The Lord has something for each of us in this world to do, and if we don't do that we'll never find happiness.

Richard White

"I'd go over there right now if I wanted to," he said. "But I don't feel that I should. When I get to feeling to where I should, I'll go."

Richard and Theresa White have spent their lives going to the Salvation Army church. Now they're considering committing to officership.

To do that, they would have to give up their possessions, such as cars or furniture and dedicate their lives to evangelical and social work for the Army. They would have to go where and when they were ordered to from headquarters. And they would have to spend two years in officers training in Atlanta, at about \$12,000 per year, said Richard, who coordinates the pre-release program.

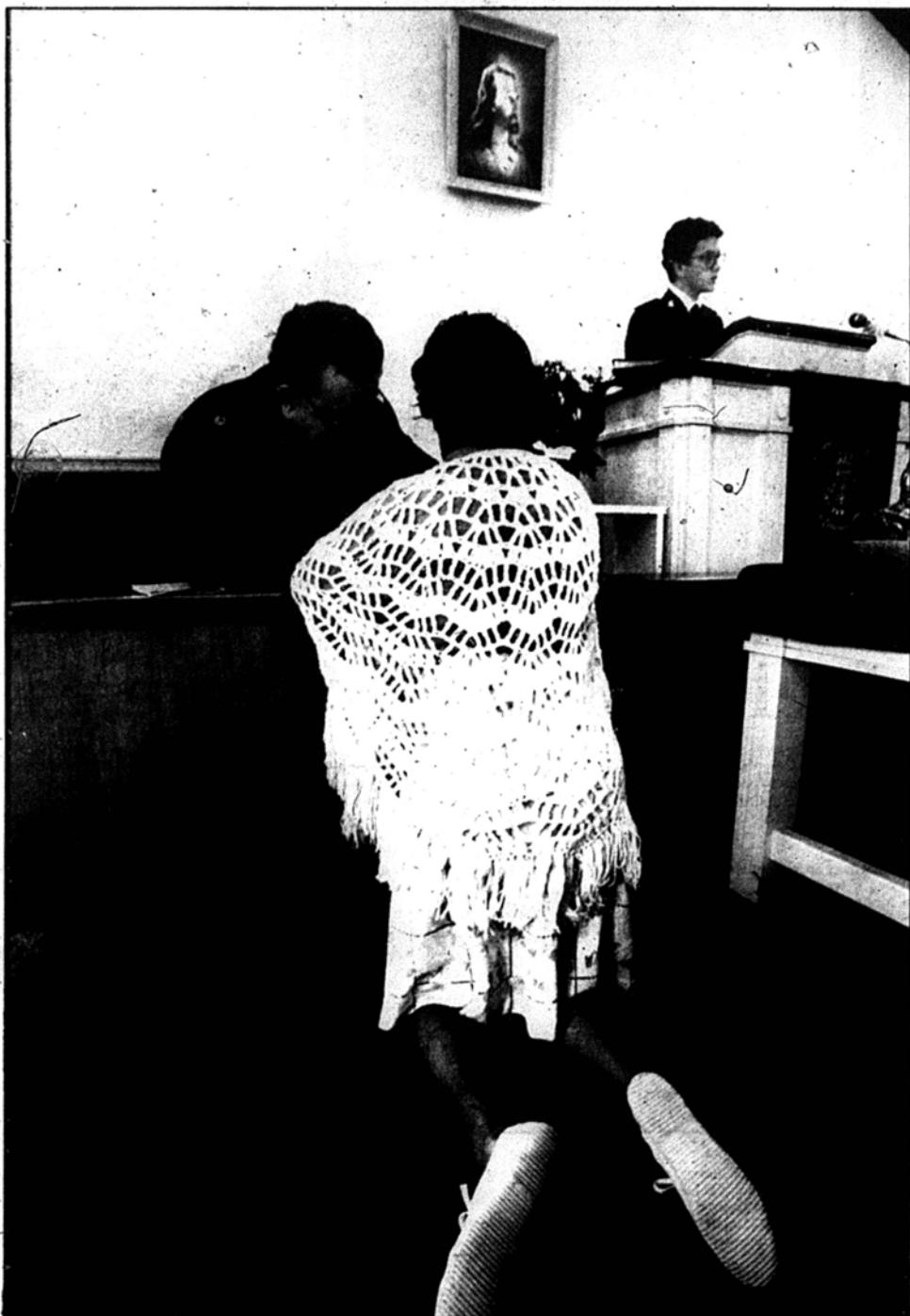
"The Lord has something for each of us in this world to do, and if we don't do that we'll never find happiness," he said. "My mother to this day will tell you she should've been (an officer), but she decided to go the other way."

Theresa's parents are officers — ordained ministers in the church — and served in Bowling Green while she was in high school. When she was younger, she hated telling people how her parents made a living. "I said my parents were ministers. I said it quick and got it over with."

But "now I don't mind telling anybody," she said. "I stand for what I am, what I do and where I go."

The Whites, 24, have a young daughter, Mandy, and are moving to their first rental house. It's a tough time to decide to give up all their possessions and go through training for officership.

All necessities — house, car and furnishings — are provided for Salvation Army



In his role as pastor, Major Snelson consoles Faye Simmons at the altar. His 15-year-old son, John, speaks in the background. The Snelson boys participate in such Army activities as the church's brass band.

officers. Officers must marry officers because they work as a team, and the "allowance" they receive is based on the husband. The wife, although equal in rank and qualification, is a volunteer.

Officers wear their conservative dark blue uniforms with maroon epaulets when working, and the job "is pretty much 24 hours a day," Richard said. Rules for wearing the uniform include going light on the make-up and jewelry, Theresa said.

After living independently for five years, Theresa's not sure she's ready for the

regimen.

Richard agreed. "You're not working for the Salvation Army, you're working for the Lord. If you quit the Salvation Army, you're quitting the Lord."

As children of Salvationists and officers, the Whites get some pressure to decide for the officership. Many officers and/or Army employees are related: Theresa's brother works for the Army in Louisville. Two of Mrs. Snelson's sisters are Salvation Army officers. And so on.

"It's hard to know when you grow up in the Salvation Army," Theresa said. "You

feel it's what you're supposed to do."

But it's more than a family tradition, she said. "It's a calling from God. It's hard to know. He doesn't exactly call on the phone."

Even now, Richard considers the Army more than a job. Besides coordinating the program, he is the church's band leader and youth Bible study leader.

Fifty-hour work weeks are common, he said. But between Thanksgiving and

Tradition, discipline Army's root

In 1878 a family of eight became an army. Since then, families around the world have joined that army, and its officers now number 25,056.

Former Methodist minister William Booth and his family started the Christian Mission in London in 1865 to minister to the displaced, underprivileged masses of the industrial era.

The movement spread, became the Salvation Army, and its slogan "Heart to God, hand to man" reflects its philosophy of ministering to the spirit by helping to meet people's physical needs. The Army, which is a non-denominational church, tries to reach people "not just by giving them food. We're trying to reach the soul," said Major James Snelson of Bowling Green.

Heart to God, hand to man.

Salvation Army slogan

Because the Army originally sought to save the uneducated and often alcoholic poor, traditional sacraments have been dispensed with. Communion — which used to involve wine — isn't served, nor are people baptized in the church. An enrollment ceremony substitutes for baptism, Snelson said.

The evangelical emphasis is reflected in the church's brass bands, a carry-over from when Army members played frequently in city streets. And open-air meetings are a carry-over from street preaching.

The Christian Mission's theme of war on sin led to the name Salvation Army. The organization took on a military structure, divided into different territories with officers reporting to and following orders from headquarters.

The church still uses military terms. Weekly donations are called cartridges. The Army's leader, Eva Burrows, is known as the General.

And the military structure, although not always pleasant, increases efficiency, Major Snelson and his wife, Sandy, said. Officers, ordained ministers in the church, must be married to other officers so they can work as a team. Those who marry outside the ranks can no longer work as officers.

Officers are transferred to different "stations" every three or four years. There are 14,377 corps and outpost stations in the 90 countries internationally. Officers get three weeks to move, but their house, furniture, vehicles and furnishings are all provided by the Army, so they only have to move personal belongings.

All such household items have to be planned for in the budget submitted to headquarters each year. The local thrift store is one budget, and everything else is put in another budget, Mrs. Snelson said.

The Army is funded through the United Way, the federal government (for the prisoner's pre-release program) and a variety of appeals, Snelson said. The Bowling Green corps raises about 80 percent of its funding through donation drives, Mrs. Snelson said.



Smoking a cigarette, James Sacrey sits quietly at the Adult Day Care Center. Sacrey, 82, has been battling Alzheimer's disease for seven years. The disease has no known

cause or cure, which makes it harder on victims and families. His wife, Mary, attends a support group. Sacrey was a book checker at Helm-Cravens library.

Families feel Alzheimer's effects

Mary Sacrey first knew something was wrong when her husband James kept getting lost.

But it wasn't until six months later and all the medical tests had come up negative that the doctor said, "the only thing I can see is it's Alzheimer's."

When the family received that news seven years ago their children "were devastated, and so was I," Mrs. Sacrey said. They had to learn to adapt.

Their daughter, Martha Madison, said it was a shock because "I relied on my father for really serious decisions in my life."

But she hasn't learned about the disease, she said.

"I don't know very much about Alzheimer's. I'm afraid to find out."

Not knowing about the disease doesn't take the pain away, she said.

"Ignorance is not bliss."

Alzheimer's disease "is the most prevalent and the most devastating dementing illness of the aged," according to the Alzheimer's Disease Handbook. It's also the fourth largest killer of the elderly, after strokes, heart disease and cancer.

It affects over 1.5 million Americans, and although it can appear as early as age 40, it usually happens to people in their mid-60s.

The handbook says that "there is no available treatment that can cure, reverse, or stop Alzheimer's disease. The treatment, then, is one of helping the afflicted individual through the course of the disorder to maintain as much comfort and dignity as possible."

That burden falls mainly on the family.

After Sacrey, 82, was diagnosed, "he slept three solid months," said Mrs. Sacrey, 68. Then he went back to working as a book checker at the Helm-Cravens Library three days a week.

And he dealt with the disease in his own way.

Once while they were driving home from the doctor Mrs. Sacrey said she asked her husband if he understood what the doctor was saying about the disease.

He did. He said he had been reading about it at the library without her knowledge.

But when Sacrey quit his job checking books it was a turning point, Mrs. Sacrey said. "And it's been downhill since."

"There was no motivation whatsoever" for him to stay active, she said. "If he don't want to do something, he's not going to do it."

But she tries to keep him alert. "In order to get any rise out of him, you have to get after him." So she scolds him and tries to get him to do things for himself.

"If I did everything he asked me to, I'd be a doormat."

Madison said her mother is "a pretty strong lady. If anything happened to her, I don't think my father would last."

Her mother is too strong-willed to let her father slip too far, she said. And her mother asks for "very little help" from her and her brothers.

"I think if she needs us, she would call us. I'm just afraid we won't be ready when she does."

Although the forgetfulness and lethargy can be distressing for Mrs. Sacrey, the constant questions are harder. "The thing that upsets me more is, 'What time is it?' and 'What day is it?'" she said.

He has even awakened her in the middle of the night to ask what time it is. "And I say, 'Hell, you're not going anywhere. Why do you care what time it is?'"

The disease has shown up in other ways, also.

Mrs. Sacrey showed beautiful drawings of their kitchen, nature scenes and Indians that decorated the walls of their small home. They were done by her husband.

But the drawing stopped during the summer that he was diagnosed as having Alzheimer's.

"His hand is steady, but he can't concentrate long enough," Mrs. Sacrey said.

Barbara Conkle, district coordinator for Alzheimer's Disease for BRADD, said "it's a disease that robs a person of their character, even their personality."

The first sign of Alzheimer's is forgetting more than is normal, Conkle said. "When these kinds of things interfere with their daily living, it should be investigated."

The disease follows the lines of early childhood development, only "it's just a kind of reversal of those abilities."

In the middle stages, people with the disease "can also have trouble bathing, grooming, these kinds of things," Conkle said. In the very late stages, the patients can lose all their human faculties.

Alzheimer's cause is unknown, Conkle said, although in some cases it may be

hereditary. Twelve research centers are studying the disease in the United States, including Sanders-Brown Center on Aging at the University of Kentucky.

"My brothers and I live in fear," Madison said. "It's hereditary, and we know it."

But until more is learned about the disease, the only thing a family can do is try to care for the victim and themselves.

Mrs. Sacrey has accepted the changes in her husband. She's even learned to deal with the situations with ingenuity and humor.

Once, when Sacrey tried to take the car and leave without her — not unusual for Alzheimer's victims — she threatened to call the police; the fire department, the ambulance and anyone else necessary. She told him "I'd embarrass him to death" if he drove off.

He never tried again, she said, but when she leaves him alone, she finds herself hurrying. "I feel I can't leave him too long at a time, because I feel he'll get away from me."

But if he were to do so, he'd have to go on foot. He no longer has a driver's license, and she took the car keys from him.

The questions and possible wandering, however, are easier to deal with than the silence, Mrs. Sacrey said.

"I think that the one thing that hurts me most is that he doesn't talk much, and now there's hardly no communication. And that's what I miss most — that communication, because we already had it."

"And now there's silence."

"What's hard is when he doesn't know us," Madison said. "It's hard for me to see him try to remember who we are."

And it's too easy to not try to communicate, she said. "I'll be sorry someday because he's gone, and every day counts."

But Mrs. Sacrey says she's still lucky.

"He has never, ever forgotten how to say 'I love you,'" she said. "And that's great,





Right, Alzheimer's patients Helen Simpson, left and Martine, far right, keep their reflexes sharp by playing ball. Above, nurse Robin Spinks holds hands with Martine as they listen to music.



because that keeps me going."

Because of the stress on families of Alzheimer's victims, support groups have sprung up around the nation to help other families keep going.

There are five groups in the Barren River Area Development District including one in Bowling Green and one in Glasgow.

The Glasgow group meets once a month in the Homewood Health Care Center, which has an Alzheimer's wing. One sunny Tuesday afternoon, five women, including the leader, Conkle, showed up to discuss coping with the disease.

Group member Malie Downing talked about how in 1979, she had noticed that her husband was acting differently. But she didn't realize it was Alzheimer's until a friend brought her a clipping about the disease.

That article would read the same today, said Sharon Cannon, a nurse's aide on the Alzheimer's wing.

"We have not progressed" in research, she said. "We can send a man to the moon, but we can't stop these brain cells from dying."

The purpose of a support group is to give the members a chance to talk about their problems to people who understand and can perhaps offer advice, Conkle said.

"They laugh, they cry, and they commiserate together."

When one woman came close to tears as she spoke, Conkle switched the group's attention to another. The first woman stared down as she ran her fingers along the edge of a book over and over, calming herself.

Conkle said later that she doesn't really know whether or not to let them cry. "Sometimes just pulling the attention away or changing the subject gives them a chance to compose themselves."

But if they cry, "that's OK. Tears are OK in a support meeting."

Even lulls in conversation can be good, and "then someone thinks of something, and they start talking again."

The support groups are also good because the caretakers need time to themselves, she said.

"You have to get away from it sometimes," Conkle said.

He has never, ever forgotten how to say 'I love you.'
And that's great, because that keeps me going.

Mary Sacrey

After the meeting, both Conkle and Cannon spoke of respite care — a day or even a few hours when the patient is cared for by others so the primary caretaker gets some rest.

Mrs. Sacrey needed help after she fell and broke her leg last year. So in August, Sacrey started going to the Adult Day Care Center in the Old Hickory Building on Scottsville Road three days a week, and Mrs. Sacrey began to attend a support group.

Being with other Alzheimer's victims and their families helps the Sacreys deal with the disease.

"Before that, you used to hide it," she said, and it was "never discussed in this house."

"Now, it's a word we all talk about." Because they can talk and share with others, "it's a different world. It's better."

Madison agreed.

Her father "looks better, he eats better" and her mother can have more time to be sociable and relaxed.

"I've adjusted," Mrs. Sacrey said. "I've Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday I can do just about everything I want to."

Respite care is good for Alzheimer's victims, Cannon said, because it "gives them a chance to socialize in a setting where they don't feel threatened."

Alzheimer's disease is the most frequent cause of institutionalization of the elderly in long-term care facilities, according to the Alzheimer's Disease Handbook.

In 1983 the people in the United States spent more than \$27 billion in public funds for nursing home care, of which about 60 percent supports the care of patients with Alzheimer's disease.

And some people, like Cannon, are working in the nursing homes to help the

Alzheimer's victims.

Cannon was an accountant who had cared for foster children and then became interested in working with Alzheimer's patients. She became a nurse's aide in February, and will start nursing school in the fall.

"But I didn't know what it was to work with old people all the time," she said. "I don't find it (the disease) depressing. A lot of people find it depressing."

"If we can get them (Alzheimer's victims) up and happy... to me, that's a major accomplishment."

"The one word with Alzheimer's is acceptance," Cannon said.

Care for Alzheimer's patients is not changing the patient, she said, but teaching the caretakers how to adapt. "You have to accept these people for just the way they are."

At Homewood, the patient can choose what they want to eat, drink or wear, she said.

Robin Spinks, director of nursing at the Adult Day Care Center, which has eight Alzheimer's patients said, "We try to stress the importance of being as independent as possible."

But even if they decide they don't want to participate, that's all right, "as long as they made the decision."

The usually subdued patients contrast with the cheerful blue walls of the Day Care. Chairs with names on the back surround tables, and comfortable, slightly worn sofas line the walls.

Although the disease causes personality changes, each victim remains unique.

One woman is talkative and friendly, approaching newcomers with a smile. She took a new patient by the hand and led her to the table, showing her where to sit.

But she tells stories that make no sense,

easily sidetracking herself onto other topics.

Another is almost always silent, but sometimes she repeats a word she hears, sometimes she sings to herself. If she is asked a question, she smiles and then looks away.

Sacrey sits quietly in a corner, watching the others.

He used to work at the A & P grocery, she said, and then he came here, to Western. No, he corrected himself, to the Day Care Center.

"You can only direct one question at a time" at Alzheimer's patients, Spinks said, because that makes it easier for them to understand.

But still, Alzheimer's patients "are aware of what they want and don't," Cannon said. "They're human beings and they have rights up to the day they die."

The disease usually results in death within seven to 10 years, but it can last as long as 15 to 20 years.

Although the future is dark, Mrs. Sacrey said, she just enjoys the good times.

"I guess I'm just lucky that he isn't worse than he is," she said.

Each night at 8, he gets his pajamas on, which can take him 30 minutes. Then he'll come back to the living room and tell her he's going to smoke a cigarette.

After he comes back again, he'll stop by her chair and say "I'm ready to kiss you," and then he kisses me, and then he sits down," she said.

"Those kind of things are funny, and that's what makes it worthwhile."

But the future is a question mark for the family.

"I don't know what's in store," Madison said. "We just have to take one day at a time."

And she'll have to deal with it. "Just facing the fact that we have to deal with it and its coming is hard."

But Sacrey said she hopes "the good Lord sees fit to take him before he can't do for himself, because I don't know what he would do."

If he does get worse though, "I don't know what I'd do. But I would try to take care of him."

Officers find front lines in back yards

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Christmas when people need everything from food to furniture, a 96-hour work week is the order of the holiday.

Working with the poor "makes you really humble," he said. "You can't complain about anything you have."

Richard is also the court-appointed guardian for a couple who attend the Salvation Army.

He oversees financial matters for Donald and Ruth Martin who were married five years ago at a gas station on Main Street.

"A man who worked there was a preacher," Donald said. "I just went to him." The station was torn down to make way for the new jail.

The Martins get disability so they don't work. But they volunteer daily at the Salvation Army soup kitchen. A perpetual grin on his face and an apron neatly tied under his belly, Donald works from about 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. frying beef patties and ladling mashed potatoes, cooking whatever is on the soup kitchen's menu. Then he cleans up.

Ruth, "Donald calls me Rootie," takes the names of the people who come in for the free hot meal. The kitchen serves about 100 people per day.

Waiting for the 11:30 a.m. opening one day, Ruth and another worker play cards in the dining room where the heavy, dank smell of frying food and body odor mixes.

Donald has been "head cook" for the kitchen for about three years. "I ain't got nothing else to do. It helps you just to have something to do," he said. "I like it as long as I'm helping somebody."

Ruth has no complaints about her job which she called a pastime. "Whenever he (Major Snelson) needs something done, a volunteer, he knows who to call on," she said. "It gives me something to do."

Ruth also passes time by tutoring. She's teaching Donald and another girl to read. She started "on account of Donald. He can read, but not too well."

Donald and Ruth met at the church. One of its oldest members, Ruth started attending when she was 6. "My grandmother started me here, and I never did stop. I went to other churches, but I always come back to this one."

Donald started going to church regularly after they married because he figured, "there ain't no way to get away from it."

After 25 years as an officer, the major could no more get away from the Army than he could detach himself from the people it serves.

Barrel-chested in his snug uniform, the major looks like he plays the tuba, and he does — in the church band. His deep voice can always be heard singing above the band during church and easily carries through the sanctuary during the service. But at all other times, Snelson's Charleston, S.C., drawl comes out soft-spoken and gentle.

Taking names in the soup kitchen, he teases a neighborhood girl who has pigtails pointing from her head in all directions. "What do you mean, Monika? Your name is Boo-Boo, girl."

The Snelsons eat lunch in the soup kitchen, and the Major helps cook and serve the food. When Donald comes to get a lodge key during lunch, the Major hands it over saying, "Yassir, boss."

Donald beams, pleased. "I ain't the boss — he's the boss."

Actually, the Snelsons are a team. "If he goes, I carry on. If I go, he does what is necessary," Mrs. Snelson said.

A 29-year veteran of the Army, Mrs. Snelson met the major when he was in training and she was an officer working for the Army magazine, The War Cry.

In those days "girls were taboo" in training, the major said. But if you didn't meet them in training, "you were pretty well left out in the cold." So a friend set him and Sandy Faour up. They had to wait a year after training to marry and have served in seven stations together.

Their job description could fill a book. "Whatever they (ministers) do, we do plus whatever else, welfare and social work," Mrs. Snelson said.

Everything they give — clothes, food, furniture, rent assistance — they have to keep records of. Their records say the local Army helped 1,200 people in March.



Their job depends on their location. In Bowling Green, they administer several state and federally funded programs, run the thrift store, keep the church going and coordinate programs for the young people. Mrs. Snelson said her duties range from sorting donated earrings for rummage sells, to picking up people for activities such as the women's club, to "reminding him of the stuff he's supposed to do."

Budget hearings, the soup kitchen, church twice a week, meetings and more meetings keep the Major busy.

But he's never known anything else. "I started going to the Army ever since I was

in my baby diapers." And Mrs. Snelson started in the Sunbeam program for young girls. She went into officers training at 19. But the Washington, D.C., native had been telling her family — she's one of 14 children — that she would be an officer since she was in the sixth grade.

Being married to your job makes it "separate, but not separate" from the rest of life, Mrs. Snelson said. "You go places to get away, but you talk shop anyway."

And in the shop, the talk comes to you. Sitting in the office surrounded by cardboard boxes, Mrs. Snelson tries to do the books. The phone rings every few minutes. As one congregation member loudly tells her about a recent illness, she holds the telephone away from her ear, smile lines wreathing her round face.

Officers deal with the "high and low. You have to be able to adapt and be flexible," she said. People who help the Army or are on its advisory board are more often wealthy and influential members of the community.

That can be as hard to deal with as the poverty. "I have a hard time relating to rich people," she said. "I feel sort of awed by them."

But soup kitchen regular Shirley Wallace said people are the same everywhere. "Even if you have enough food, it (the soup kitchen) is psychologically good for me. The people are interesting."

Wallace lives in her car which pulls two trailers. She has six dogs. She taught music in Indianapolis until three years ago when she got sick of the system, she said.

"I've been playing hooky," said the middle-aged woman who wears layers of clothing and keeps her hair in a disorderly bun. But she wants to "get back to it (teaching) to please the Lord."

The break and travel have taught her a lot, though. "I didn't know half as much about people. I think I've grown up a little," she said confidently. "Mr. Major (Snelson) is helping me."

Railroad buffs work to keep train lore alive

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think, "You wait 'til we get to Guthrie," where there was a straight stretch of track, and "honey, they'd open it up." This would cause short trains especially to rock.

One by one the passengers would raise up, "and soon they'd be sitting up," said Manthe, 83. "You did well to hold on."

For W. C. Roddy, a 76-year-old former engineer for freight and passenger trains who lives in Bowling Green, the rails were a way of life. He can tell story after story of his working days, even getting misty-eyed at the memories.

He proudly told about running a train with 160 to 170 cars of nothing but new automobiles. Making tracks on Muldraugh Hill, he said, that train "was a beautiful thing up on that hill when the trees were greening up and everything."

And he nearly smashed into Bowling Green's depot with that train in the early 1970s, a story he still chuckles at.

Coming south toward the depot, he realized that the derail was on. The derail sets cars off the tracks, but he was headed for it in the wrong way and fast.

His said his brakeman told him, "That's gonna derail us! We're gonna really have a mess right here, and we're gonna get that passenger station above all things."

Instead, they stopped within 12 feet of

the passenger station. After they had stopped, the operator asked over the radio, "Where are you now, W.C. Roddy?"

Deciding to have some fun, Roddy replied, "Just about ready to start taking on that passenger station."

"And here come them men running out of there like a bunch of little ducks," said Roddy, laughing.

The station might have been spared that time, but progress would soon kill it.

By 1973, Amtrak, who began running passenger trains in most of the United States in 1971 and paid to use L & N's track, announced plans to stop the Floridian, Bowling Green's only passenger train. The train ran from Chicago to Miami, stopping in Bowling Green twice daily every day of the week. But it, too, stopped in 1979.

Brown has his own idea of why the number of passengers declined.

"No one wants to ride trains because it takes time," said Brown, who has logged more than 60,000 miles on passenger trains.

For Brown, meeting people makes train travel more satisfying than other forms of transportation. On trains, "everybody talks," unlike planes where "you sit there and kind of wonder who's sitting next to you, but you don't talk."

Others miss the luxury and friendliness of trains compared with modern modes of travel.



A CSX Transportation train speeds across a bridge just north of the old passenger station. GSX, based in Jacksonville, Fla., has about 4,000 miles of track in Kentucky.

Marie recalled the frills of the passenger trains — their plush seats, the pillows that could be rented for 25 to 50 cents and the dining car that served "the best food in the world."

To preserve memories such as these, about 20 former railroaders and rail buffs in Bowling Green formed the L & N Club in December.

Club President James Boucher, who retired as Bowling Green yard master in October, said members eat breakfast and

swap stories at a local restaurant on the second Saturday of every month.

And the group is toying with the idea of putting together a railroad museum, although Boucher said the club won't know whether it's feasible until this summer.

Meanwhile, the dusty wooden benches in the littered, vandalized depot are empty, and there are no lines at the ticket counter. The building is silent, save for the periodic rumble of passing freight train, reminiscent of an era gone by.