

What would America be like if everyone declined to volunteer? The very notion of the question put to Jane Pickens Hoving is one she appears to find nigh onto unthinkable. Yet she does not hesitate a breath's length to answer, her clear blue eyes fixed solidly on her guest, her Georgia-accented voice dropping to a fervent near-whisper, but brimful with conviction in the manner of an evangelist: "Why, I'll tell you exactly. There would be no America!"

Volunteering and the United States of America are two causes so dear to Mrs. Walter Hoving's heart that she has turned over a goodly portion of her life to serving their needs. She was a founder of United Cerebral Palsy, recipient of the 1968 Distinguished Volunteer Service Award presented to her at the White House by Mrs. Lyndon Johnson, and chairman of the Domestic Operations Committee of the National Volunteer Services Advisory Council under Presidents Nixon and Ford. And she finds it a source of pride and amusement that she met both her husbands in the line of voluntary duties. Her first, the late investment banker William C. Langley, was chairman of Beekman Hospital when young Juilliard-trained Jane Pickens was asked to sing "The Star Spangled Banner" at the hospital's opening. Board membership on the Salvation Army brought her together with the advisory board founder Walter Hoving, Tiffany's chairman and her groom of two years.

Some months ago Mrs. Hoving launched, in the greater New York Metropolitan area, what she hopes will be just the first chapter in this country of a service called Tune In, Inc. (located at 730 Fifth Ave.), a matchmaker of people and volunteer jobs. Already 5,000 organizations are listed with Tune In, which provides a central telephone number so that those interested in donating their time and expertise can call in, make an appointment to see a representative, and ultimately find work suited to their talents.

The name Tune In was inspired by her belief that "we all have a voice of truth within us. It's really God—what I call God, anyway—or shall I say a personal set of principles. I'm urging that you tune into your conscience and do something for others. You know, America was *founded* on the concept of volunteering. We were set up to help each other; we've always done it. I absolutely adore our country and our people, but we're in a bad way in many respects. I want to help fix that up. And I feel all of us need a little inspiration. People will say to themselves, 'I'd like to do something, but I have no special ability.' Well, everyone has an individual, unique thing they can do, and Tune In can give them the means to put it to use."

Tune In represents one of the most innovative approaches to addressing what has long been rumored to be a nationwide crisis in the voluntary sector—a rumor gone awry, as it happens. While it is true that, as Mrs. Hoving expresses, "There is a greater

need for volunteers today and an organization with enough volunteers to meet the demands made upon it," the total number of volunteers has not diminished. Indeed, it is at an all-time high. Voluntarism simply has a new look. In the process, it has gone through a bit of an upheaval, giving a vigorous shaking about to old stereotypes.

The standard image of the volunteer goes something like this: a white, upper-middle-class matron supported by a generous husband who spends her many hours of spare time doing the good deeds of pushing a hospital cart or stuffing envelopes or baking up a batch of cookies for a church sale.

Our new world of volunteers bears little resemblance to this portrait, as dated as a sepia print. The spectrum has considerably broadened, encompassing a wide range of ages, nationalities and educational, econom-

ties, they organize escort services for the needy and shelters for victims of domestic violence. This action-oriented volunteering has across-the-board support because of the growing realization that our resources are limited and that we have to put individual and neighborhood muscle, instead of government systems, behind improvement in our quality of life."

Thus, the fear that voluntarism is on the wane is largely the outcome of the exceedingly narrow way in which we have come to define it. Great historic dramas have been wrought by volunteers, who have made permanent changes in the social fabric of this country. Yet one often forgets that the women's movement, the anti-war movement, the civil rights movement and now, even the nuclear power movement, are essentially formations of volunteers. As John Cahill points out, "Who would have dreamed that an unknown man named Jarvis and his group of supporters stood a chance against the government? Well, they created an economic revolution in local finance with Proposition 13. And they were *volunteers*."

On the dark side, the sweeping shift in contemporary concerns of American people has been stressful to many traditional institutions such as Red Cross, Boy Scouts and American Cancer Society, who have suffered either a loss of volunteers or an inability to recruit new ones. Sex and child abuse, rape or dying, are issues that don't often don't fit into formal agency structures.

Another key reason is the return of women in dizzying droves to the salaried labor force, reducing the pool of volunteers "in a particular kind of setting," notes Kenn Allen, executive vice-president of VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement in Washington. "And I must emphasize a *particular kind of setting*: largely the social service, human service agencies that rely on volunteers during the daytime hours."

Explains Ruth Sloate, executive director of The Volunteer Clearing House of the District of Columbia, "Fewer women have time and money to volunteer. In general, the economy has forced the issue—they simply *have* to work. But there is also the added element that most people today prefer to get paid for their work because society puts so much emphasis on money. If you think of volunteering as unpaid employment, you are not going to be inclined to donate your time."

But it has not, in every case, been economic necessity or the self-esteem of a salary that has turned some women away from volunteering. Connie Mellon, for instance, "quit the charity stuff because I decided that working in photography was far more rewarding to me. Many women have found more substantial interests in life than charity balls—that is to say, they don't feel they



ic and social levels—along with a percentage of men fast approaching that of women. According to a U.S. Census Bureau study, 43 percent of all volunteers are male. The study also revealed that some 37 million Americans—or one in four over the age of 13—gives to a cause without payment, equivalent to \$67 billion of time. "That," says 32-year-old John Cahill, nephew of Jane Hoving and executive vice-president of Tune In, "is a payroll no government could ever afford to meet." Mr. Cahill cites statistics indicating that the number of volunteers engaged in *all* the various components of American philanthropy is more like 50 million.

All things considered, notes Mary King, deputy director of Action, the federal voluntary agency, "Volunteering is thriving in America; it is however, different. Volunteers no longer bring baskets of food to the poor. They run energy conservation programs, they renovate houses in communi-

have to get involved with these committees just to say they're doing something. Sometimes it was just a vehicle to get to know the right people. The old thing of using it to climb socially is out. Nobody cares anymore, thank God, what school you went to or what benefit you chaired. Brains and integrity are the things that count now and that's such a good thing. It was just too small a chart for too big a body of water. Women's lib has created a lot more flexibility. Rather than the lovely little 'young-lady-out-of-college, what-mother-did' slots, there is a freedom we didn't have fifteen years ago. The doors have opened to so many things. And why not? If I had it all to do over, I would opt for something more fulfilling than charity balls. Yes, I most certainly would."

Surely, the tempestuous reverberations of the feminist movement had a significant bearing on membership malcontent in the late sixties and early seventies; if homemakers, the message went, were unpaid laborers, then homemakers who also volunteered were certainly victims of double exploitation.

About five years ago, the National Organization for Women officially blasted certain kinds of volunteering as merely another reinforcement of the economic dependence of women. The paroxysms of fury that NOW's stance set off among many major organizations has yet to settle, and national secretary Sandy Roth is grateful for the chance to set the record straight: "NOW never said women shouldn't volunteer. After all, NOW itself is a voluntary organization of 100,000 members, with a very small paid staff. The distinction we drew was one between volunteering for social change and of simply performing maintenance duties. Women have been the backbone of many segments of society in the helping professions, and that goes at least as far back as Florence Nightingale. We've carried things as important as hospitals. But instead of being a growth experience, these unpaid positions have often worked to women's detriment. When they've tried to enter the job market, they have not had their volunteer work credited. What we strongly urge is that volunteering be change-oriented work, and that society recognize it as valuable, skilled labor. When volunteerism was something—quote—*housewives did*, it had no status. We're saying the status should always have been there."

Happily, the trend is moving securely in the direction of higher education and the corporate world giving credit for volunteer work. Melba Ferguson, media specialist for the Girl Scouts, recounts the story of an uneducated Mexican woman in Utah being hired as director of community Head Start on the basis of her time served as a Girl Scout leader. Such a success story reflects another trend: that of organizations channeling their efforts into sophisticated, alluring

training programs. The Girl Scouts now have one of the largest adult education programs in the world, which is probably partially responsible for their steady increase in volunteer membership in the last four years.

National news editor Barclay Bollas of the Boy Scouts reports that they have made major changes in offering more training opportunities for more people nationwide.

Largely because of the remarkably high quality of its programs, the Junior League has bigger provisional classes than ever. "I'm convinced," says Alice Weber, national president of the Association of Junior Leagues, "that young women are willing to give their time when they feel they're doing something significant—contributing to the community while also gaining skills and insights. What's been critical to our success is that we've both addressed ourselves to



Jane Pickens Hoving, founder of New York's innovative match-making service Tune In, which pairs volunteers with volunteer jobs.

WILLIAM STRODE

contemporary issues like rape crisis centers and V.D. hotlines and juvenile delinquency, and armed our members with the tools they need to change institutions and systems. We no longer apply band-aids to things. In our volunteer career development program, we assess the skills women already have as well as the ones they can develop. Many have entered the job market on a much higher income level than they would have done without this training."

But entering the paid labor force does not necessarily mean that women will no longer volunteer. On the contrary: census studies show that people who are employed are more likely to volunteer than those who are not. Moreover, many juggle very high-powered voluntarism with fulltime jobs—including the young. Jamie Niven, 33-year-old son of actor David Niven and an investment banker heads the special projects committee of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, where he has volunteered

for 10 years. Thirty-five-year-old Mrs. John Royall III manages to chair important benefits each year for the Spoleto Festival while also running the British-American Oil Company, of which she became president two years ago. An annual dinner and party for the Third Street Music School is chaired by oil and gas investor Mark Harrington and his wife Beth, who heads a private art consultancy, E.B. Harrington and Co. Both are in their mid-twenties.

According to Kimberly Farkas, who, for the past four years, has clocked in considerable time weekly at New York's Odyssey House, a drug rehabilitation center that recently expanded its sheltering wings to victims of child abuse, child pornography and child prostitution: "There is a big difference between my generation of volunteers—women in their twenties and thirties—and those who very commendably raised a million dollars for a cause but couldn't imagine themselves actually working first-hand with the problems those dollars tried to right. These women would have been very uncomfortable near drug addicts, whereas a younger generation, coming out the turbulent sixties, isn't. In fact, these younger volunteers almost have an urge to mix and mingle. It is important to them to see, first-hand, the results of their volunteered time. By acting as representatives of the real world, representatives who really care and can actually emotionally benefit the reformed addict, they feel contributive. It is important for them to see that their efforts pay off, that the programs they're involved with at the center really work." Many people a generation beyond continue to work for pay and no pay: former actress Mrs. H. Spencer Martin, who has produced several plays, chairs two benefits a year for the Strang Clinic. "I pay absolutely no attention to anyone who says all work should be paid work," she declares. "I believe what I do for the clinic is enormously worthwhile. And if I want to produce a play, I still produce a play. The two things do not interfere with each other." Mrs. Samuel E. Gates, head of the Greater New York Council of Girl Scouts, is a trial lawyer. And stockbroker Mrs. Marquette de Bary takes on "a one-shot deal every year, something I can put a lot into." So far it's included projects for such organizations as The Museum of the City of New York, the Boys Club, the Police Foundation and the New York Botanical Foundation.

This one-shot-deal volunteering seems to be the drift in some traditional organizations, according to Helen Foster, chairman of volunteers of the American Red Cross. "More people, especially the young ones, want a project with a beginning and an end rather than a long-term commitment," she says. "And we're having to gear up now toward more evening and weekend work. We're having a real problem recruiting volunteers for daytime."

(Continued on page 225)

