

Handicapped, He Fights For Survival

(Continued from page 1)

received a telephone call from a man who introduced himself as Richard. He told me that a rabbi had given him my phone number. His voice sounded youthful and vibrant, and when he told me about his affliction I first thought someone was pulling my leg.

But I was shocked to learn that this man, phoning from his hospital, had been bed-ridden for almost 10 years, was blind and unable to walk.

A native of New York, Richard Jastrow was graduated from the University of California, having studied music and literature. A handsome man of normal features, he suffers from a rare skin disease that led to ankylosis spondylitis, an inflammation of the spine with his joints frozen solid. He cannot move and is unable to even sit. Glaucoma has left him nearly blind, and he is hard of hearing.

After a hip operation, he was placed in numerous nursing homes and county hospitals, and has been moved scores of times. Nurses and doctors classify him as an extremely difficult patient, unlike any other resident of a convalescent home.

For the last two years he has lived in a small apartment with a nurse provided by Los Angeles County. Mentally, he is alert and doesn't want to remain silent. He has a zest for life and is optimistic, but also lonesome. He is desperate for calls, letters, visitors to read to him and financial help to purchase a tape recorder, a typewriter for the blind and, he hopes, a computer than can read to him. He dreams of sharing a house with another man of similar afflictions.

Talking with him on the phone almost every day, I am amazed by his knowledge of current events, new books, films and plays. During his

long, sleepless nights he listens to radio talk shows, and follows the news during the day.

Often, he closes our conversation laconically with the words, "I'll see you later." Sometimes, he expresses his thoughts about the value of life, of his life. Feeling the warmth of a summer day and hearing a bird chirping at his window, he gains strength to go on living. He especially opens up in his writings, often in uncompromising terms. "The greatest victory that can ever be won is the war never fought, the war never begun," he declares in one poem.

Watching him operating the phone, a tape recorder and a small typewriter set vertically on his bed, I am reminded of the German Jewish poet Franz Rosenzweig. Nearly paralyzed, he transmitted his last utterances by tapping in code.

Perhaps 50 years from now, a book or play may depict Jastrow's drive for fulfillment, one at least as significant as that of John Merrick, the Elephant Man.

Jastrow is eager for contact. He may be reached at 5909 W. 6th St., Los Angeles, Ca. 90036.

UNLV's Moyer Student Union Activities Board is offering a series of new fitness classes and outdoor adventure trips beginning in February.

The fitness series includes jazzercise, aerobics, massage, and even bike repair and maintenance courses. The classes, which are open to the public, begin the first week of February, and cost between \$16 and \$50.

For those interested in adventure or travel, the MSU Activities Board has planned a variety of courses and trips, including a sky diving class, a whitewater rafting trip, and a tour of China. The less adventurous can enjoy a \$30 shopping trip to the Los Angeles Garment District or an \$80 wine-tasting trip to Santa Barbara.

For more information, call 739-3575.

Ben-Gurion University Program Offers New Start To Young People



BEERSHEVA — The radiant smile of this young Ethiopian immigrant reflects his joy at being given a second chance in life by Ben-Gurion University's Community Action Unit. He is one of 12 young people (aged 21-36) who are selected each year to attend the Unit's Newstart Program in order to make up the lost ground of their previous schooling. The only requirements for admission are ability to read and write Hebrew and a thirst for knowledge. A one-year intensive course of study brings the participants up to eleventh-grade standard (or higher) and many then enroll at the University's Pre-Academic Center or at vocational training colleges.

The BGU Community Action Unit also runs educational enrichment programs for children in disadvantaged neighborhoods, potential community leaders, Ethiopian immigrants, Bedouin highschool students and prisoners anxious to make a new start in the community.

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev is supported in the U.S. by American Associates, Ben-Gurion University with offices at 292 S. La Cienega Blvd., #211, Beverly Hills, CA 90211. (213) 854-6161.

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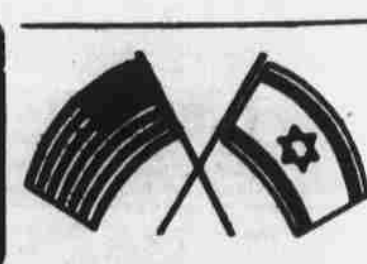
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