

Crisis service helps all people

United Press International

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — If your teenage son or daughter comes home from a party stoned and sick, where do you call first for help? poison control? The hospital emergency room? A youth drug center? Most cities have single-service agencies aimed at treating specific problems. Residents of Monroe County, in upstate New York, can call Lifeline, a 24-hour, 365-day-a-year, crisis intervention service. Lifeline pulls together the county's most vital information agencies to provide help for a wide range of needs.

The Monroe County service is not affiliated with the Boston-based Lifeline organization, which has about 30,000 subscribers enrolled nationwide in 800 programs.

"We (the Monroe County service) look at ourselves as a comprehensive first entry to the whole network of mental health and other human services," said director Betty Oppenheimer.

Not all crises are life-threatening, she said.

"If an 89-year-old woman is homebound and has had a cat for years as a constant companion and the cat dies, that's a crisis for her.

The 10-year-old program began with three existing services in the Rochester area: A poison control center, a mental health information and crisis service and, a medical emergency service. In 1981, administrators added a United Way human services referral network.

"This way you can call for an immediate assessment for an emergency or to ask somebody about where to get services or just to talk," Oppenheimer said.

Counselors direct callers to the right places to receive help instead of providing face-to-face, on-going therapy themselves, she said.

"All our work is short-term crisis intervention. We don't duplicate anything already available in the community.

"It makes a lot of sense to integrate services, particularly

Police can't keep track Machine gun market sky-rocketing

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DALLAS — There are nearly four times as many machine-guns and assault rifles in the hands of private citizens as in the hands of police officers, and they are all sold through a legal street market that has skyrocketed in recent years, federal officials said.

Keeping track of that market is an obscure agency in the Treasury Department that keeps its files manually, is hampered by conflicting regulations and enforces laws that date back to the 1930s.

All a private citizen needs to own a fully automatic weapon is \$200 for a one-time tax, about \$500 to buy the weapon and the patience to fill out one set of forms. He will not be photographed or fingerprinted, and local law enforcement agencies need not be consulted.

One Dallas arms dealer, who asked not to be named, said the number of people taking advantage of loose regulations has grown to be a problem for dealers.

"It's making business hard for people who want to operate a shop because everyone is a dealer now," the dealer said. "The big market isn't over the counter. It's out in the street."

Gary Schaible, who heads the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms branch that deals with firearms regulations, said there has been a definite increase in the number of applications for licenses for automatic weapons. Automatic weapons that fire continuously as long as the trigger is held down.

"The total number of licensees who can engage in National Firearms Act activity has increased 185 percent in the last five years," Schaible said.

Firearms are regulated by two laws: the National Firearms Act of 1934, which pertains to automatic weapons; and the Gun Control Act of 1968, which regulates imports and interstate shipments.

The 1934 law requires a \$200 tax be paid before a private citizen can own an automatic weapon.

That was a big enough tax to discourage buyers in the 1930s, but it totals about the same as a good stereo set when added to the cost of an automatic weapon today. They range from \$500 for the Ruger Mini-14 assault rifle to \$2,500 for the belt-fed German HK-21 light machinegun.

"Dealers and individuals are getting them," Schaible said. "That's where the increase is. A lot of it is for collection purposes."

In 1981, the last year complete figures were available, Schaible said law enforcement officers had 18,740 automatic weapons, compared with a total of 68,650 in the hands of private citizens.

What kind of people buy machineguns?

"My best customers are lawyers," said the Dallas gun dealer. "They'll get a guy off, then go home at night and say, 'My God, this guy killed eight people with his bare hands, and he's loose.' After awhile he'll come see me."

"I'm seeing a lot of people nowadays who are making good money, but they're machinists, blue-collar workers," the dealer said. "I think primarily the increase is in people who are just figuring out, 'Hey, I can own a machinegun.'"

The 1934 law permits a private citizen to buy a machinegun if he pays a one-time \$200 tax on the transaction, but the application requires an affidavit from the local police chief or sheriff attesting to the buyer's good character.

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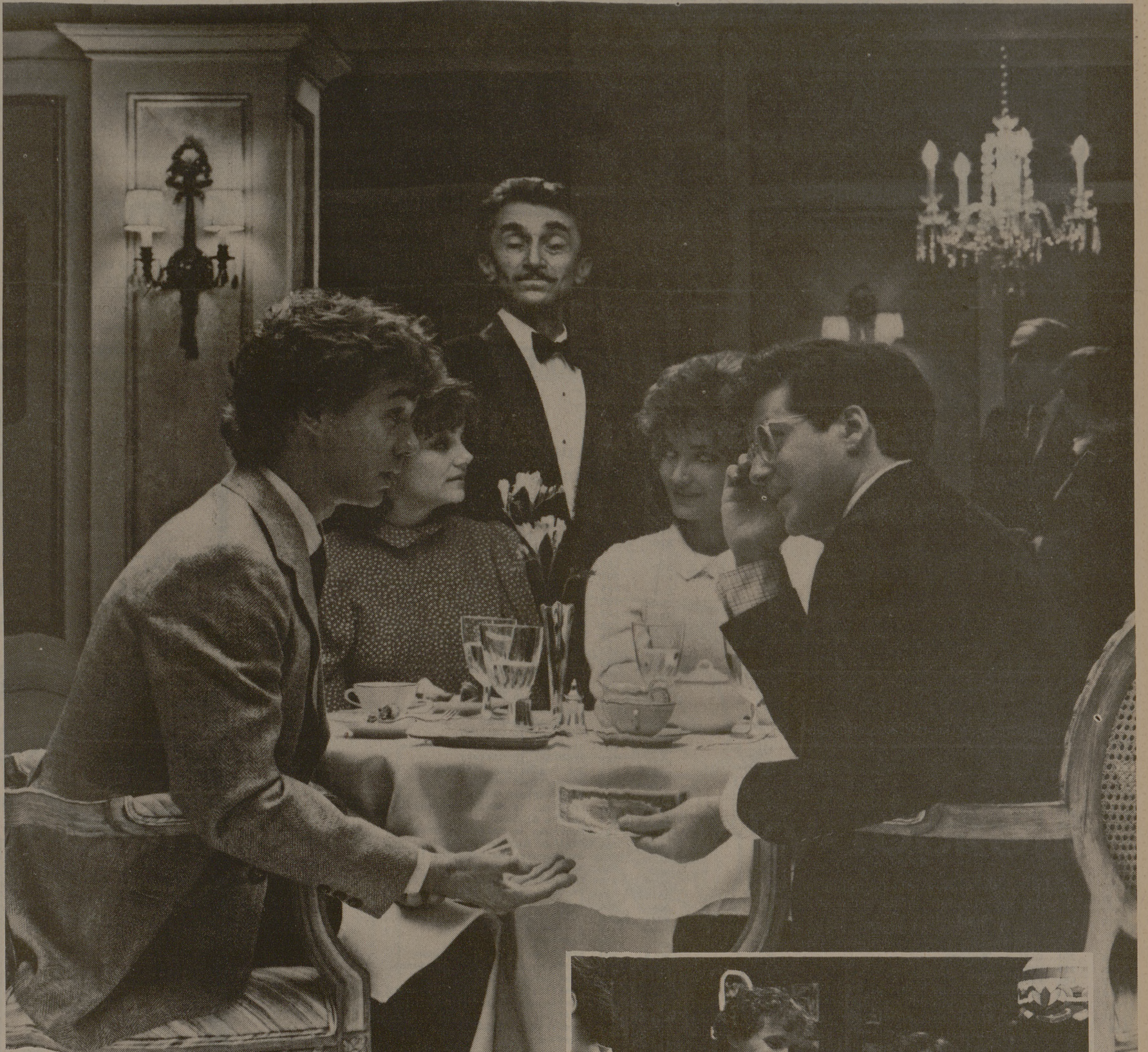
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