

Moms on Macs

Doris Magnant, 81, a former second-grade teacher knows first hand what it is like to be depressed. And now she knows the value of introducing something new into her life. In this case, it's her first computer, which her son gave to her as a birthday present last November.

"Living alone, I had been so lonely," Magnant said. "Now I'm online and my son is going to get me on to the Internet. And a little girl in the apartment complex is doing a report and she's been using my computer for the last three nights to write it."

Which is exactly the point Dr. Ruth Harriet Jacobs was making last month at a 90-minute talk yesterday at a Massachusetts senior center. She said that elders who find themselves alone can make their lives better and happier if they try and cultivate new friends and interests. One of the things Jacobs stresses is that elderly people have a lot of wisdom that others can benefit from. One way to impart that knowledge is to write memoirs.

"You've seen a lot of social history and women's history," Jacobs said. "Writing is so wonderful and it's much cheaper than therapy."

Mrs. Magnant would be the first to agree with that. At yesterday's session she held a copy of *So Dear to My Heart*, a memoir written by her cousin and Worcester, MA resident Jane Goyer when she was 95. Goyer lived to be 98, according to Magnant. One of the reasons Magnant wanted a computer was so that she could write her own memoirs. "Being one of fourteen children, I've got a few stories to share; but I haven't seen a keyboard since high school."

It took some time for Magnant to get used to the computer. "It was in my bedroom and I said to myself 'what am I going to do with this monster?' she recalled. " But it's my television and my telephone besides being my computer. It plays both music CDs and interactive CDROMs too. I just started to use it and now I love it; it really has opened up this entire new world to me."

Oh, and by the way, it's a Macintosh!