

Getting it together

There's a trusting child in every Scrooge

My feelings about Christmas run hot and cold. At times, I would make a good Scrooge up to my ears in green and red advertising campaigns, neighborhood decorating competitions and obligatory social events.

But I'm also a real sucker for Handel's "Messiah" and for stories like "The Miracle on 34th Street" which encourage us to believe there is a place for childish hopefulness in our adult world.

Amidst the hassles of today's realities, it is easy to become a skeptic. Christmas spirit requires a lot of props, a lot of pretending. At a time when we feel deluged with news about the worst of humanity, it's not easy to celebrate the best.

Religious and secular folk tales and customs inspire us to dream of the power of brotherly love, to imagine how nice it would be to be part of a close family. For those with strong family ties this is an opportunity to make the most of such happy circumstances.

FOR THOSE WHO lack this closeness, however, it can be a time of painful awareness. But, even this sadness can ultimately be a positive aspect of the holiday, if it helps to show how much it hurts to live without the love and support of others.

It is too easy for most of us to just push our loneliness out of our minds. Over-emphasizing the importance of individuality and independence, we have become blind to a great natural resource, the support of other human beings.

Our mutual needs for interdependence set us apart from most of the animal kingdom. Our tendencies to share, to cooperate, to help and to enjoy being generous are as precious as they are taken for granted.

And the best part is that we don't have to wish for these gifts. We already have them. They are part of our basic nature. Out of the wisdom of tradition, we have chosen to remind ourselves of this fact every year. We give gifts to celebrate our

By
BOB TRENZ,
Ph.D.



generous nature. We accept gifts to acknowledge that we need each other. Songs are sung and stories are told to tug at our under instincts, to reacquaint us with our need to believe in Santa Claus and love and angels and each other.

Of course, Christmas has accumulated a lot of unpleasant customs. Too much of our loved gift shoppers, a saturating bombardment of television and printed adver-

tisements, exploitations and exaggerations all give us plenty of cause to become Scrooges.

TOO OFTEN we get so carried away with trying to produce the "best Christmas ever" or the "ultimate holiday" promised by magazine covers, we are too exhausted to enjoy the fantasy we have created.

But even our tendency to become skeptical Scrooges is just a sign of how important the holiday ritual is to people. This paring attitudes toward Christmas are most often a "sour grapes" attempt to keep yourself from getting your hopes up too high.

As with Dickens' famous character, with every Scrooge there is a little child that aches for the security of believing in Santa Claus, of being a loving, lovable person.

Bob Trenz is a Rochester psychologist and marriage counselor. Questions for Dr. Trenz may be sent to Rochester Eclectic, 110 N. Main, Rochester, 14603.

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Don't underestimate importance of that paycheck you earn

By MARGARET MILLER

Money does indeed buy happiness, and the women who earn it should recognize its worth and their.

This question of the old adage was the message brought to the Schoenfeld College campus by writer Caroline Bird and heard there by women who work, women who study, women who study and work and women interested in understanding more about their changing place in the scheme of things.

Talking to women during a reception in the women's resources center and lecturing later in the Mainroom Center, the author of "The Two-Paycheck Marriage" pointed away at the theme that society needs to play catchup with the role women already are taking in its work force.

All our contributions—like social security and tax laws—are based on the nuclear family unit, with a husband who provides the paycheck, a wife who provides services and children living at home," she said.

But nearly only 34 per cent of our people live in that unit, and the rest are governed by a system that does not fit the way they live.

This is the real reason we need the Equal Rights Amendment.

As things are now, social security taxes money from working women to pay the pensions of housewives, and it is the cost of all to housewives whose services are not counted at all if they divorce.

AN "UNEASINESS" among women that Ms. Bird has noted in traveling around the country is the underlying reason behind a new magazine, Working Women, which she has a share in publishing.

We're trying to make it a publication of real service to women who aren't fully sure yet how to handle their roles," she said.

We're not dealing with rhetorical questions. We want to talk about things like dealing with discrimination on the job, working for promotions and dealing with family problems that may be connected with the fact that Mother works.

She said she thinks such a publication is needed because of a number of attitudes she's found programmed into women who hold jobs.

These she said include the notions that women work for satisfaction and the money isn't really important, that their paychecks are far less important than those of their husbands and that they should be able to handle the home front too if they want to hold a job.

En Glimmer of the federal manpower commission has admitted Ms. Bird said, this country now would be a lot grimmer were it not for the paychecks of working wives. Their bolstering their husbands' in-



CAROLINE BIRD

comes often holds the family together.

To support her money buys happiness arguments, Ms. Bird suggested that a marriage with nagging problems, like the husband not wanting to pick up his clothes, might be saved if there is enough money to hire someone else to pick up those clothes.

And she insisted that there must be changes in home rules of working women and their husbands. Both have been programmed to accept traditional roles, she explained, and the wife must convince her husband to pitch in and share the housework and child care.

THE VISITING WRITER, also author of "The Invisible Man," "Born Female," and "Interruption Women," said she now is working on a book based on a survey made by the magazine Family Circle on the attitudes of men and women toward jobs for mothers.

Some of the results were rather surprising to the magazine, editors, she said. For instance, there was a question about what time a mother should go to work whether it should be when the baby is a few weeks old when he starts school when he starts high school or never.

The biggest percentage said it was reasonable when the child started school, but apparently, a large amount had been expected for staying at home entirely.

Other parts of the questionnaire, she said, dealt with the use that should be made of the wife's paycheck and the amount of help at home the husband should or did give.

Most husbands and wives felt the wife's pay should be used for special family purposes, like vacations or college," she said.

But many agreed that what happened was that it went into the family pot.

"Hardly anyone thought it should be paid money for the wife."

On the matter of help she went on, "all the husbands figured they helped some, but the wives' answers indicated the husband's contribution tended to be things like watching the kids while they were asleep."

women also came up in the survey. Ms. Bird said.

"The women who worked part time and participated indicated they felt they had the best of both worlds," she related. "But other answers they gave indicated they found their lot really not that good, because they tended to have the crummiest jobs and be more at the mercy of their employers."

The picture that emerged was that part time work may well be the worst of both worlds.

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