Understanding—first step toward coping with grief

Those who don't know Harriet Sarnoff Schiff well listen in amazement to her. She frequently creates the impres-sion that here is an extremely macabre

personality.
Seated one recent afternoon at the Midtown Cafe, Mrs. Schiff talked about death and dying with the same humor and candor that the rest of us reserved

and candor that the rest of us reserved for life's least depressing experiences. "That's the point," she pointed out emphatically, leaning forward on her elbows to spear her listener with bright, intelligent eyes. "I want most to havbe this show pull everything about

Biders and sponsors are needed in the St. Jude bike-a-thon scheduled for 9 am. May 31 at First Presbyterian Church, 11 Mile and Farmington roads. The money raised through the Wheels of Life bike-a-thon will be donated to St. Jude Children's Hospital. Adult riders will follow a bike roate from the church through Oakland Community College on Farmingion Road near Twelve Mile and back to the church.

Riders from 6 to 12 years old will be

Bike-a-thon needs riders

death and dying out of the closet!"

The conversation took place on "any ap but Monday," which is "Reachout" day on radio station WCAR (1090 AM). The 2-3 pm, program, she said, is a call-in talk show where listeners share grief, problems, concerns and experiences with her, her husband, announce Sandy Schiff and guest speakers knowledgable on the subject of death

knowledgable on the subject of death and dying,
"This is not a suicide prevention service," she said. "It's a sharing service. What worked for grieving people, how they dealt with their grief, this is really what I love to hear. And, I doi"
The tiny, energized Birmingham res-

for Lisa." Lisa is this year's poster child for the bike-a-thon. She was a 4-year-old afflicted with leukemia who died a few months ago.

RIDERS who collect \$25 or more in

RIDERS who collect \$25 or more in pledges will be awarded a T-shirt emblazoned with the St. Jude bike-a-thoo slogan and insignia. Persons who collect \$75 or more in pledges will be given backpacks carrying the same insignia and slogan.

Sponsor sheets for riders can be obtained at the Farmington Library on Library, the Farmington Hills branch on 12 Mile east of Farmington Road and at the Farmington YMCA on Farmington Road north of Twelve Mile.

Riders can enroll in the bike-a-thon

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and dying.

In his best-selling autobiography, television personality Phil Donahue de-

television personality Phil Donahue described their meeting as his most un-forgettable experience.

The encounter took place on Donahue's syndicated show after publication of her book "The Bereaved Parant." That book detailed her responses to the death of her 19-year-old son. Mrs. Schiff drew an audience, he said, made up entirely of parents who lost children.

children. "I saw those people sitting there, the audience, and many of them were younger than me," Donahue said, "and — you know, I didn't lose it, but it's as emotionally involved as I have been or ever will be in a show. That show transcended the tube."

THE COMPLIMENT pleases Har-riet Schiff, but it doesn't overly im-press her, or prompt her to think of an avalanche of dollar bills derived from

exploiting her loss or those of others.
"You know, I made a lot more mon-"You know, I made a lot more money as a newspaper writer," she said.
"However, since it did happen to me,
and since I have the skills to work with
besically, since this horrible thing
happened to me, then others should
benefit from it."

benefit from it."

Her book is in its seventh printing, with editions in German, Dutch and also printed in Great Britain. So the invitation to have a weekly radio talk

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show seemed an opportunity to expand the discussion of death and dying to all preving people who want to help one another or receive help, she said.

Writing about death, and ultimately being able to discuss it on the radio, she said, was prompted by the death of her son Robby a dozen years ago. Five years later, she found that she was able to face his death with the skill that was most natural, writing about it on paper. In retrospect, she said, she had not death at she was beginning a new life when she wrote, "The loss of a child of any age — even an adult child — whether by accident, litness, suicide or war, is the ultimate of tragedies. But, it is also a tragedy that must not be compounded by allowing verything around you to die."

THE WORDS sparked responses among thousands of grieving parents who crowded into theaters, church halls, community centers and around television sets whenever she appeared. She considered it a major breakthrough when her husband, who frequently ac-

companied her, was able to draw aside groups of men for candid discussions of their feelings.

"Feeple can be so cruel," she said. "I guess they think that men don't hurt, but they do."

The experience of seeing men pouring out grief, anger and tears with one another made a vivid impression. One recent broadcast was devoted to male grieving, with guest experts Thomas Murphy, the Lincoln Park Councilman, and the Rev. Bob Weikert, whose wife died unexpectedly on their honeymoon. "We talked about things like people thinking that the best way to help a

metality that can't deal with being able thinking that the best way to help a maget over grief is to find him another woman. Young also described his Each program, she said, is the prout of thorough advance research from which she prepares a list of questions to make sure that all aspects of the topic are covered. Whether the topic is "Death and the Law" or who should have the final say on the style of burial title dead or the living?], each program will include personalities and experts

LOOKING to the future. Mrs. Schiff LOOKING to the future, Mrs. Schiff sees no end to the list of subjects that should be covered during her program. Prominent on the list, she said, is a piece on suicide in Detroit.

"Economics and suicide are a very big issue," she said firmly.

"For instance, there is the corporate reputality, that early day with being and the programment with the care," does not have been able to the care, and the programment with th

"For instance, there is the corporate mentality that can't deal with being layed off and possibly never being able to return to what they were trained for. Or, the recent articles about the rate of suicide among policemen. I feel morally that something has to be done on this whole issue."





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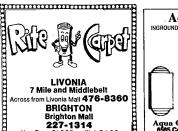
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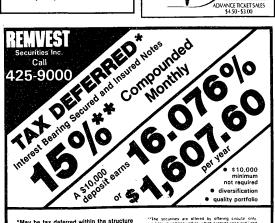
DATE 8 LOCATION Friday, May 30, 1980 7:30 p.m. Liberal Arts Bldg Schookcraft College 18600 Haggerty Rd. Livonia, MI 48152.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Why the American dlet may be one of the world's worst.
Problems with our 'health' care industry.
Disease Patterns.
Almost all diseases are nutrition related.
What you can do in the way of prevention: or 'Health Care VS Sickness Care'.
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