

by KATHY PARRISH

Last year an Oakland County teacher bought both her husband and father snowmobiles for Christmas. This year it'll be ties under the tree.

"We're cutting way back on Santa," said the mother of one, laid off from her school district after 10 years. "There won't be many presents and the ones we do give will be little."

Losing a job is always difficult. But being unemployed during the holiday season is even harder to face.

"Holidays are exaggerators of everything good and bad in life," said Oakland University psychology professor Harvey Burdick, who believes the emphasis on family during the season adds extra stress.

"If the parent doesn't have a job, he feels he's not fulfilling his role in the family. It comes down smashing at this time of the year."

Coping with a thin wallet when it's the season to buy, buy, buy isn't easy. But there are things families and friends can do to help make the season jolly — even when Santa is standing in the unemployment line.

"Christmas can be a nagging time," said Betty Lu Spurgeon, a program director for the YWCA. "It could be a depressing time if your family isn't careful."

MRS. SPURGEON, whose husband lost his 16-year engineering job with Chrysler Corp. and was unemployed for six months, encourages family communication during rough times.

"Don't be afraid to include everyone in the family in the planning process — even the older children.

"There will be things that will have to be given up. Let the children feel they are important and have input."

She also urges family members to help shoulder financial burdens. "They can get a paper route to help out or make gifts rather than buying them."

Talking about the layoff and its consequence is very important.

"Children can make demands and make the father reflect on his lack of ability. These are things that should be talked about openly and confronted," said Burdick. The "real sadness of unemployment, he said, is loss of self esteem.

"The parent must be led to understand his status is not undermined by not having a job."

PREDICTING THIS will be a difficult holiday season because of high unemployment, Joanne Jocque of Catholic Social Services agreed that talking is a great help.

"Being stoic can be destructive; it can cause a great eruption," she said. Ms. Jocque is a district supervisor for the agency. Her Grosse Pointe office offers a new program called Fighting the Unemployment Blues.

"It's best to share concerns with family and friends. In any crisis there can be real growth through improved communication."

While families should try not to make demands at Christmastime, she urges them not to "overstep."

"Doing too much for someone can be more demeaning. People still need to feel competent and responsible for managing their own lives."

Burdick also advises family and friends not to "walk around as if the unemployed person has a terminal disease. Unemployment is a societal problem, not a personal defeat."

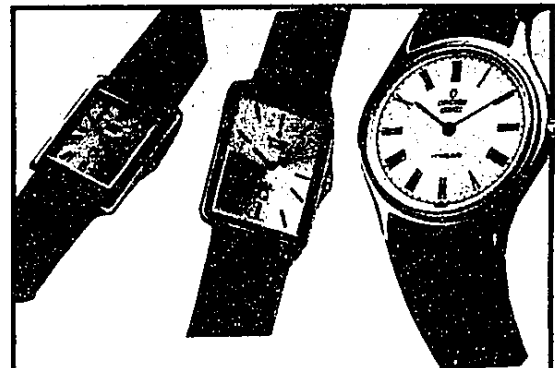
IT'S ALSO important to keep busy during the holidays, either by exercising, housecleaning or creating gifts. "Use the time to advantage rather than sitting back," said Ms. Jocques.

Mrs. Spurgeon, whose Clawson YWCA program focuses on women, urges them not to sacrifice totally during a lay off. "Women carry a great deal of the burden of holding the family together when men are unemployed. Everyone has to sacrifice and the tendency of the women is to feel they should sacrifice more," said the Huntington Woods resident, who found herself not wanting to go out.

"There are non expensive things to do," she added, suggesting card games with friends and other cheap activities. "Don't close yourself off. Staying in the house just makes it all worse."



CONCORD'S QUARTZ calendar watches. Accurate to within 60 seconds a year. With sweep second hand, sapphire crown, mineral crystal and a lizard strap. Swiss crafted in 18 karat gold electroplate. Lady's: \$290. Gents: \$390.



NEW CONCORD QUARTZ NINE LINE WATCHES IN 14K GOLD. Only four millimeters thin. Accurate to within 60 seconds a year. Handcrafted in Switzerland with imported black lizard strap. Left: \$1,115. Center: \$1,090. Right: The Royal Mariner—thinnest water-resistant watch ever made...\$1,390.

CORUM.



The gold coin watch by Corum. Completely handcrafted in Switzerland, from an authentic \$20 gold piece for men, and a \$5 gold piece for women. Men's \$5990. Ladies \$4650.