

# Education will chart country's future

THE MAN oft referred to as "the American Cicero" did come home. Yes, scholar and author Russell Kirk, who holds a thermometer-long list of degrees, came back for the 50th anniversary of his Plymouth High School graduation, chapered by his enchanting and vocal wife, 22 years his junior, the former Annette Yvonne Cecilie Courtmanche.

When my bride and I brunched with them on the Sunday the Kirks were in our midst, Bob Wisler's ears must have burned.

It was Wisler, one of the better trained, more observant newspapermen of my ken, who wrote the editorial which had run three days earlier throughout the Observer & Eccentric empire headed, "Awareness: first step to improved education."

"Oh, great," enthused Annette as she read it. "Awareness is No. 1."

"That's a very good piece," praised her husband, author of 25 books plus countless essays and articles, winner of the Ingersoll Foundation's 1984 humanities prize, co-founder with William F. Buckley Jr. of National Review, and



Fred DeLano

credited by President Ronald Reagan as having helped renew "a generation's interest and knowledge of the underpinnings and intellectual infrastructure of the conservation revival in our nation."

Annette's credential aren't too shabby either.

A FORMER HUMANITIES teacher in New York who has borne four Kirk daughters, this vibrant lady was one of the 18 members of the National Committee on Excellence in Education whose 1983 report, "A Nation at Risk," has stirred commotion the length and breadth of the land.

In brief, the Kirks know whereof they speak.

They live in a picturesque Mecosta setting in the belly area of Michigan's lower peninsula. Through the years the guest list has been dotted with names such as Buckley, Charles Kuralt and others from a who's who dedicated to classical disciplines and a reawakening of moral imagination. Education is intrinsic to their lives.

They also have opened their home to graduate students who share meals and pursue their chosen field of study under Kirk's guidance and tutelage. At the moment there are five such students in residence.

"The ends of education are wisdom and virtue," believes Kirk, who will be 68 in October.

"It is the moral imagination which lifts men and women above the level of the beasts that perish.

"To form sound mind and good character: to these objects an educational system should be dedicated, but in most schools, colleges and universities they have been submerged by sociality and sociological indoctrination.

"It has been very nearly forgotten that formal education has an ethical end, to be achieved through an intellectual means."

Of her service on the National Committee on Excellence in Education, Annette said, "I felt on that commission there were three scientists who were very powerful; they wanted everything. All the business people were pushing competition. My interest was essentially humanities."

"NO ONE was saying that schools have a mission to enhance the understanding of what it is to be a human being. Education should be seen as something for an individual's own growth, not just for growth in the gross national product.

"I was able to get into the report, for instance, that the study of literature should enhance imagination and ethical understanding. For five months we had been talking about excellence in education and always it meant test scores. What about moral and intellectual integrity and character?"

"Our report got the attention of the

media, not because it was a Reagan commission, but because there was a moment in history when liberals and conservatives both agreed something was wrong."

And what does Russell foresee for the future?

"I suspect what we're going to see is further division of the population," he commented as the waitress poured more coffee. "The great majority will become non-readers, virtual illiterates, technically trained for certain occupations."

"We'll have much greater class division than we've ever had before in American society. There's a great deal of talk about democracy will be diminishing. Only a relative few will be well enough informed to make decisions."

Our conversation didn't end there, but this has been a sample from a tape that runs well over an hour. Annette put it, "People can't communicate, even if meaning the same things, in the same words anymore. We have to clothe the naked public square from the wardrobe of a moral imagination."

It starts with you.

## Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. None can be returned. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. Letters should be limited to 300 words in most cases. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

## Stick to the facts columnists is told

To the editor:

Where was Mr. Barnaby when the (host ordinance) issue was being considered? It sounds like a dictated message from Ms. Dudley (Farmington Hills councilwoman).

Impossible to believe he's done his homework so poorly; no statistics from any of the cities where the ordinance appears.

His off-the-cuff condemnation of a very sound ordinance places a burden on previous positive reporting in the

Observer-Eccentric papers.

The flip cartoon is a further handicap to the poor article.

All of society holds hopes that our young people will reach adulthood; I sympathize with those that don't want them to accept responsibility for their own actions.

The police are not interested in arresting one 17-year-old that takes a drink.

Parents having their homes destroyed because of an uncontrolled party are grateful for the interruption, and often the youth is when he or she has lost control of the party.

Lina Jensen  
Farmington Families  
in Action

## Clarifying the law's purpose

To the editor:

The intent of the party ordinance presented by Farmington Families in Action was not to "nail nasty adults." Rather the intent was:

• To give reinforcement to kids who don't want to use drugs and to parents who refuse to serve minors.

• To make all parents and "kid adults" aware of their legal obligations concerning minors and drugs.

• To give Farmington Hills police the strong arm they need to take action

against the large "keg" parties.

• To show our youth how strongly this community feels about the use of all mind-altering drugs by minors.

It is common knowledge that the majority of teenage parties are held when parents are not at home because "kid adults" know their parents wouldn't approve.

The party store owner who sells to minors must be held responsible, but so must the minors who are using illegal IDs to purchase. I believe "kid adults" must realize the consequences of their illegal buying, selling and/or using of drugs.

Betty Nicolay, past president  
Farmington Families  
in Action

## A special thanks to the community

To the editor:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many area residents for their numerous kindnesses and expressions of concern during my recent medical leave from the Farmington Community Center.

Also a very special thank you to my staff and the Board of Directors for assuming the extra responsibilities to keep things running smoothly.

Betty Palne, executive director  
Farmington Community Center

### the Claymore Shop FOR MEN

OUR SEMI ANNUAL  
**TRUNK SHOW**

The Claymore Shop personally invites you to the fall showing of the most distinctive names in off-the-peg and made to measure cloth

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Charles Hopkinson  
Thursday, September 18  
Friday, September 19  
Noon to 9:00 p.m.

Swatches from all our clothing manufacturers will be available through October 4th.

**Linett Ltd.**

personally represented by  
Marvin Cusky  
Sept. 25, 26, 27

**Southwick**

personally presented by  
Mick Traunac  
Oct. 2, 3, 4

Please be our guest for wine and cheese during these special showings

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