

# Americans need to figure out sex's place in life

## MORAL PERSPECTIVES



REV. ROBERT SCHADEN

Tune in any talk show in America in the past few weeks and a major topic of discussion has been whether gays should be allowed in the military. I do not intend to argue here for either side of that issue. However, I do wonder whether the sexually schizophrenic society that we seem to be can intelligently argue the issue with any degree of grace or credibility. Even a cursory glance at our societal psyche would suggest that we attempt to run in opposite directions at the same time. On the one hand, we decry pornography and a lack of values as sexually wild. On the other hand, we think nothing of selling jeans by advertising derrieres. Often the same people who say "amen" to the preaching against sexual irresponsibility in a building on one corner are buying it in one form or another in a building on another corner.

The same society that looks askance at a child exploring his or her genitals out of healthy curiosity has no problem at all satisfying their own morbid curiosity about what goes on behind the closed doors of other adults. While we attempt to teach the young to respect themselves, we continue to pay for the cable companies to let it all hang out in family rooms.

One reason that comedians are expected to spice up their acts with juvenile sexual content is that audiences are looking for some place to drain off the underlying doubts and anxiety they feel in regard to their own sexuality.

So we nervously laugh our sides out in front of the late night stand-up, and then a few hours later write a different script for the teenagers whose curiosity brings us to near panic. In one area we talk about sex and commitment, while in another we pass out condoms like gumdrops with the illusion of total protection.

We decry the lack of sexual val-

ues in families and society but become paranoid over the possibility of teaching values along with biology in the sex education offered in our schools.

It may be that we need a scapegoat for our problems with sexuality, and gays fill the bill as well as anyone. I do wonder whether the gay issue would be the problem it is if we were halfway comfortable with sexuality in general.

Would sexual orientation be

the volatile issue that it is if we were not as obsessed with sex as we are? Obsession with anything is as alive and well in those who are constantly decrying it as it is among those who are forever exploiting it. The person with the sign screaming against sexual anything is often the flip side of the person for whom it is nothing more than an indoor sport with more long-term losers than winners.

The issue at hand is not nearly so much whether citizens who happen to be homosexually oriented should be allowed to serve in the military. The issue is, how do we come to grips with and integrate our sexuality into the gift of life that is ours to live? The issue is whether we can come to accept our own sexuality with its confusions, its power, its volatile nature and its marvel.

Can we accept the desires we

own without allowing them to own us? Can we be grateful for what we are rather than comparing ourselves to the illusory model we have created for ourselves?

Can we come to understand the dignity that each of us has regardless of our orientation, rather than throwing all our energy into putting down those we do not understand because that is so much easier than getting on with the

work of understanding ourselves? Homosexuality will forever be a problem until we can look sexuality in the eye and know its place in life for everyone.

Rev. Robert Schaden is with Neuman House on the campus of Schoolcraft College in Livonia. If you have a question or comment call him at 953-2047, mail box number 1876, on a touch-tone phone.



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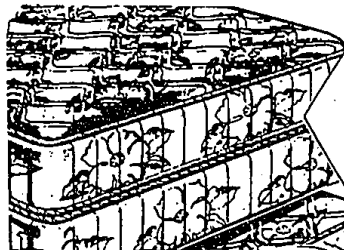
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## Judge back on board

Judge Edward Sosnick will be returning to his role as chairman of the Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board.

Gov. John Engler reappointed Sosnick of Bloomfield Hills for a two-year term on the board, which establishes policies, procedures and standards for providing domestic violence assistance programs and services.

## Grant expands food program

Forgotten Harvest, a non-profit organization working to eliminate hunger in the Detroit metropolitan area, has been awarded a grant of \$31,530 by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

This grant will enable Forgotten Harvest to realize a two-year dream of obtaining a second refrigerated truck to expand the program's surplus perishable food program. Currently, 16 tons of food per month, supplementing 15,000 meals per week, are transported to feeding agencies. With a second vehicle, many more needy people will receive food that would otherwise be discarded.

The donated surplus food is collected from restaurants, bakeries, food wholesalers, vending companies and other health department-approved sources and delivered to soup kitchens and shelters in the metropolitan Detroit area. The non-denominational organization was established in August of 1990 and is run by a volunteer board of directors and a limited paid staff. The 501(c)(3) organization is funded by private and corporate contributions, grants, and fund development.

Established in 1950 by John S. and James L. Knight, the foundation makes national grants in journalism, education and the field of arts and culture. It also supports organizations in communities where the Knight brothers were involved in publishing newspapers, but is wholly separate from and independent of those newspapers.

For more information about Forgotten Harvest, please contact Pat Anderson at (313)557-GIVE.