

## At OCC

# Students examine society sex roles

By CORINNE ABATT

Where can you discover what college students are thinking—their con-

cerns, their answers for a better life tomorrow?

Well, surprisingly, you could try the English composition classes at the OCC Orchard Ridge campus. One teacher says a simple theme (subject) approach "is a good way to acquire worthwhile and reflective writing."

In the past, instructor Nancy Antisdel, says it has been civil rights, the Vietnam War, political and economic issues.

Now, she says the topic that commands student interest is "changing sexual roles, sex role stereotyping and sexuality as a social question."

The students have been examining their own lives to build awareness of themselves in relationships with others.

They have written themes on androgyny (relating to a combination of male and female traits) and experimented with role playing.

HAVING LONG AGO identified sex stereotyping, the students talked about it in their own backgrounds.

Several described fathers who only helped around the home if there was a crisis, such as a mother being hospitalized. Others described their fathers as willing to help, occasionally took or do dishes.

*"I was always brought up with the idea of being a housewife. But, I know that isn't going to be my complete role."*

—Debbie Rae

Some of the young women recalled being told that girls did the dishes and boys carried out the garbage—boys mowed the lawn and girls helped with the cooking.

One young man said he wasn't allowed to help in the kitchen (that was women's work) and speculated his father would have "broken my neck if he'd have seen me playing with a doll."

Elle Morris, on the other hand, recalled playing with a G.I. Joe doll and playing house "because there were a lot of girls on our street."

"What part did you take when you played house?" Mrs. Antisdel asked. "Oh, I was always the father," Morris answered smiling.

Debbie Rae commented, "I was always brought up with the idea of being a housewife. But, I know that's not gonna be my complete role."

By studying to be a CPA, she adds she's invading "male territory."

YET IN SPITE of a modern outlook, "I think I've been programmed to wait on males," Ms. Rae says. She chose her career field because she likes it and it will pay well and provide enough flexibility so she can raise a family while working.

This exploration of roles and how society programs roles was a quiet discussion with each describing personal experiences.

"I think role changes come out of necessity and I feel it's how much you like doing certain things," Kathy Montette summarized.

In the next class, the subject was the same. One young married man announced he was going to cook the Thanksgiving turkey, just to see if I can. I burned it last year.

None foresees any radical change in their behavior and most agreed that in a family situation (and most were planning on the traditional nuclear family arrangement) the work and money would be divided according to need and time.

Only one, Marie Dailey, had encountered obvious discrimination on the basis of sex.

Ms. Dailey, a pre-med student, working as a ward clerk in a Detroit hospital, said the women nurses supported her goal to become a doctor, but not the male interns and doctors.

"They are always telling me, 'go find yourself a good man,'" she commented.

"Their attitude only makes me more determined," she added.

Several of the men commented the role of the housewife—home all day, watching soap operas, taking care of kids—sounded boring.

One man said he could wash dishes and clean the kitchen much better than his sisters, but since he worked and went to school and they didn't, he added, "I revert doing it when they're at home not working."

Ms. Antisdel said the original intent had been to deal more with futurology, "but we couldn't spring ourselves into the future."

Jeff Schwartz answered, "It's hard to see the future from an open standpoint. We're continually basing our thought on past experiences."

These students will probably not go out tomorrow and start role switching. At this initial glimpse, they seem-

ed rather traditional in their attitudes, but now they have one thing going for them. If a situation pops up where it is necessary and expedient for them to become androgynous, they could, and probably would, with little guilt.

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