

Happiness comes with love and service

MORAL PERSPECTIVES

When the founding fathers of America wrote the Declaration of Independence, they included one phrase which was to have wide repercussions later in the history of this country, "the pursuit of happiness."

The idea of happiness is, of course, nothing new. Americans did not invent it. It has been known in a hundred cultures and experienced universally for millennia. What was novel in the formulation of the founding fathers was the emphasis on happiness as something to pursue, a goal worthy of the greatest effort.

Serious thinkers have not always looked with favor on this phrase. Not that there is anything wrong with being happy — their outlook is not jaundiced — but they have two reservations.

First, is happiness really to be the highest goal of man? It is subordinate to, or more important than, let us say, the idea of duty, or respect for others, or faithfulness, or honor? And second, can happiness really be acquired by pursuing it? It is not really a rather elusive prize which you can win only indirectly by living in a certain way, and not by direct chase?

But these debates are really academic. Today, we accept happiness as terribly important and for most, it is the highest value that life has to offer. We no longer ask questions about the wisdom of pursuing it in order to attain it. Indeed, we do not simply pray it, we are relentless, fanatic, single-minded in our hot chase after it.

It is important to note that we have changed the word "happiness" to "fun" and with it has come a change in the character of our aspirations. Happiness implies an ordered, harmonious way of life which offers deep sat-

isfaction. Fun conveys different notions. It is escape. It suggests losing oneself consciously in a world where all tensions are released and inhibitions loosened. The pursuit of fun has become America's major enterprise.

I do not want to be cast in the role of the grim-lipped, deadly moralist. There is nothing wrong with a life that provides for occasions of fun, provided that these not contradict the other values that impart excellence and honor to human existence. It is not morally commendable to be a humorless bore. Some diversion or escape is both necessary and welcome in human life.

My concern, however, is with that great number of Americans who have unconsciously transformed fun from occasional entertainment to a lifestyle, from a casual distraction to a consuming passion, from an occasional release to a total immersion in an escape from challenges to which life summons all of us.

Perhaps life in this compli-

cated, dangerous and troublesome world is too deadly serious for most people, but still, that is no excuse for avoiding its problems or withdrawing from its demands.

The word "fun," according to Webster, comes from the middle English *fonnen*, which means to be foolish or to fool someone. Too much concentration on "having fun" is the epitome of foolishness. And if one spends his life in a nervous, anxious, guilt-laden pursuit of fun, then he fools no one but himself.

One of the most enlightening statements on this subject comes from George Bernard Shaw: "We have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it."

By lightening the burdens that others carry, by offering comfort to the depressed, hope to the dispirited, faith to the weary, and sustenance to the deprived, we become worthy of the great prize of happiness.

Workshop aims at helping gays

With approximately 10 percent of the population predominantly lesbian, gay, or bi-sexual, and the impact of AIDS, all health care and mental health workers must be comfortable with gayness and bi-sexuality.

The Oakland University Continuum Center will offer an evening workshop that deals with counseling gay and lesbian clients from 7-10 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 29, on the Rochester campus.

Seminar presenters Sarah Uhle and Stuart Itzkowitz will provide an informative, enjoyable and non-threatening atmosphere in which to gather counseling information on gay issues.

Specific workshop topics will depend upon the needs of the participants. Selections will include: coming out, health issues, promoting positive self-image, substance/sexual abuse, spirituality, relationships and homophobia.

Fee is \$39; MasterCard/VISA accepted. Three National Certified Counselor Credits are available. Register by Oct. 27; call 370-3033 or outside the Rochester dialing area call 1-800-370-3042.

The Continuum Center is part of the Oakland University School of Education and Human Services and specializes in programs of personal enrichment and professional development.

For sale: wild bird seed

The Detroit Audubon Society has scheduled its 16th annual wild bird seed sale for Saturday, Oct. 24.

This fund-raiser helps sustain many educational activities of the society and helps preserve wildlife habitat.

Many types of seed are for sale. Prices range from \$8.45 for a 25-pound bag of sunflower seeds to \$18.95 for six suet cakes.

Orders must be received no later than Friday, Oct. 16. You can pick up your seeds at three locations: Memorial Park in Royal Oak, Novi Feed and Grain in Novi, or the Farms Park in Grosse Pointe Farms.

For more information, call 545-2929.

How to Judge A Judge:

BY BACKGROUND: A graduate of Harvard and the University of Michigan Law School, Martin Doctoroff was a Special Agent for the FBI before building a 27-year career as a trial lawyer. In 1987 he was appointed to the Michigan Court of Appeals — our state's second highest court. His peers elected him Chief Judge in 1992.

BY CHARACTER: As a lawyer, Martin Doctoroff's intelligence and preparedness benefited his clients. Now as a judge, his integrity and vast trial experience benefit all Michigan citizens. Applying organizational skills and concern for promptness and efficiency, he brings increased order to his court. The Oakland County Bar Association's Judicial Qualifications Committee rated him outstanding.

BY EXPERIENCE: Judge Doctoroff's views and vision have been shaped by his own legal career as well as by his many legal offices: Public Administrator for Oakland County, Special Assistant Attorney General for Michigan; Chair of the state's Attorney Discipline Board; leadership positions on county, state and national Bar Associations.

BY ENDORSEMENTS: While he has received many, from both public and private associations throughout the state, those of his colleagues are indicative of his judicial qualifications: Past presidents of the Oakland County Bar and the State Bar have given endorsements. Now he needs yours. Vote November 3.

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RAYMOND TANTER, Ph.D.

Professor of Political Science

University of Michigan

Thursday, October 22 at The Plaza Hotel

16400 J. L. Hudson Drive, Southfield

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For further information, call the SDDA office at 443-5311.


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