

ALL IN THE FAMILY

I rarely disagree with syndicated columnist Sydney Harris but a recent column of his in which he extolled the virtues of learning by reading the great classics struck a sour note.

Harris was rebutting the argument of a couple of Midwest columnists who had decreed that it was sufficient to watch television to learn everything you need to know.

Harris retorted that television was probably the worst way to learn anything.

After 30 odd years of reading everything I encountered including cereal boxes and 10 years of TV supersaturation, I am inclined to be turned off by both suggestions.

The truth is I suppose that at this point in life I am tired of living vicariously through the mediums of print and electronics.

I once thought to be well-read was the only way to an education. I now believe that to be well-lived is an even better method.

Well-lived? What does it mean? Not indulging oneself with material luxuries certainly. But to have experienced as wide an assortment of people, things, emotions, adventures as one's environment allows. After one's own world has been drained, then resort to the environment of print.

The notion is not a new one. I came across a motto some years ago and the truth struck me. "Books should be a preparation for life, not a substitute."

Then I happened to read an interview of a well-known public

figure whom I admired and who possessed demonstrable sophistication and education.

"Read?" he said. "Who reads? I haven't time to read." The very words struck as heresy. Obviously if he were educated he had read sometime. But it set me thinking. What were the classics anyway? Someone else's adventures, observations, feelings, conclusions, beautifully and stylishly put together of course.

But if one takes the time to become conversant with the wisdom set forth by every savant and pundit when does one find the time to sharpen one's own ability to feel, to compare, to learn at first hand.

Perhaps it is the times we live in — when headlines in Washington rival any excitement found in books, when the people with whom you come in contact daily are more pungent than the creation of some novelist's mind, when just listening and observing in a checkout line, a doctor's office, a crowded bus exposes you to more drama than any conjured up art.

There is of course a time to read. But perhaps we should leave it to the untried young and the less mobile old. We in the middle should learn by doing.

The Danish philosopher Soren Kirkegaard has pointed out that enlightenment we vainly sought out in books might be found if we took the time to heed the conversation of simple serving maids or the utterance of a "raw soldier."

Books and TV have their place but they are no substitute for one's own powers of observation when it comes to self-education.

Teachers Briefed On Homosexuality

BY PAT PETRASKE

"Be kind, be objective and be open to growth," instructed Father John McNulty, a moral theologian from Immaculate Conception Seminary in Darlington, N.J. He was talking about homosexuality, at a teachers workshop at Mercy High School.

Homosexuality, a topic that "has come out of the closets" in recent years, is one of the topics in the diocesan sex education program that he said must be taught "without an attitude of disgust, repulsion or moral superiority."

"Never make homosexuals the object of ridicule; those who sneer the most are often the most unsure themselves," said Father McNulty whose recent book, "An Invitation to Greatness," devotes a chapter to the problem.

He defined homosexuality as a "psycho-sexual attraction towards members of the same sex" and pointed out the difference between homosexuality and homosexual acts. Some people may perform a homosexual act out of curiosity, for money or because of circumstances such as confinement in prison and in school, he said. He cited the example of a young girl at an all-girls' school, who because of her reading "about love, women's liberation and her needs for protection" may become involved in a relationship with a classmate. He added that some psychiatrists view this as just another stage of development.

Dealing with the problem of homosexuality has been hampered by certain misconceptions the theologian continued. The "limp wrist and the high voice" are not always an indication of a homosexual personality, he noted. While the militant homosexuals receive the most

attention, "85 per cent of those involved are not militant nor are they criminals," said Father McNulty, adding that homosexuals frequently are targets of blackmailers.

Another misconception is that all homosexuals want to be cured and become heterosexual. One tool used to change them is the law. Only in Illinois is the act between two consenting adults not considered a crime. "You can give people rights without approving their behavior," he commented.

Admitting that homosexuality is not an "ideal state" Father McNulty termed it more a "variance than a deviance." Traditionally, homosexuality was considered an illness because it was seen as an object relationship rather than a "whole person relationship." Theologians who take a neutral position on the issue believe a homosexual act can be as "selfish or as selfless as a heterosexual act," that it can be a search for mutual love, respect and stability the priest noted. He observed that socially condemned behavior "gives a person a bad self-image, insecurity and a label which makes life difficult."

Scientific research, he reported, has shown that homosexuality like left-handedness may be a genetic matter which would make homosexuality a "no-fault problem."

Father McNulty takes a compromise position in his attitude toward homosexuality which includes these views. Homosexuals are often not responsible for their condition, therapy often holds little hope for change, a heterosexual relationship can be ideal, while a homosexual relationship is never ideal, celibacy or sublimation is not always possible, and a homosexual stable union is better than promiscuity.



Seton officers [left to right], standing, are the Mesdames Coyne, Monahan, Ryan, Cleary, Gullen and Redmond. Seated are the Mesdames Porter, Maurer, Fritsch and Tierney.

Seton Women Raise \$55,268

Funds totaling \$55,268 were presented recently to St. Mary's Hospital by the Seton Branches. The amount represents an increase of more than \$6,000 over the previous year.

At the annual meeting of the chairmen of the Seton Branches Feb. 2, committee heads reported profits as follows:

Mrs. William Sheehy, Seton Charity Ball, \$19,500; Mrs. Norbert Wrona, Seton Sale, \$24,000; Mrs. E. H. Tallmudge, Seton Shop, \$8,000; Mrs. Raymond Porter, Seton Fashion Show, \$600, although this is considered by the group as a strictly social event.

Mrs. Richard Maurer, chairman of the Needs List, reported a donation of \$1,043. The Seton

Educational Scholarship Fund reported a donation of \$1,625.

Fund raising activities for 1974 will be directed by Mrs. Joseph Vasile, chairman of the charity ball; Mrs. Clayton Bush, Seton Sale, and Mrs. Nicholas Nicosia, fashion show.

New executive committee officers were elected to serve two-year terms. They include: Mrs. Richard Maurer, general chairman; Mrs. Raymond Porter, first vice chairman; Mrs. Joseph Fritsch, second vice-chairman; Mrs. Daniel Coyne, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Ambrose Redmond, recording secretary and publicity; Mrs. Arthur Tierney, treasurer; Mrs. Robert Monahan, Seton projects advisor; Mrs. Martin Gullen, telephone

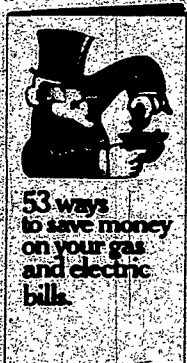
committee, Mrs. John Ryan and Mrs. Garrett Cleary, advisors.

The Seton Branches are organized under the direct supervision of the Women's Board to assist the administration of St. Mary's. The membership is about 1,000 women from all parts of Rochester and its environs who are organized into 72 branches, each with its own chairman.

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