

PA Offers a New Hope To Parents with Problems

By MARTIN TOOMBS

Some types of impulsive behavior formerly regarded as criminal are seen today as symptoms of emotional disorder that can be treated. Kleptomaniacs and alcoholics, for example, can seek psychological help.

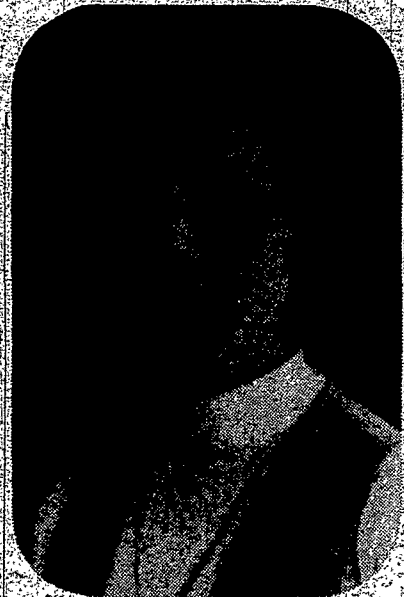
Emotional problems that lead people to beat their children are not so readily attacked. There are criminal penalties, obviously, for mistreating children, so those who do it are not likely to seek the counselling they may know they desperately need.

Parents Anonymous (PA) is a self-help group for child abusers that tries to solve the problems before mental and physical harm to the children or a breakup of the family occurs.

Mrs. Betty Lansdown, a former child abuser, spoke recently in Rochester about the activities of PA and the problem of child abuse, and told her own story.

Mrs. Lansdown was one of six children, and always felt she was an outcast, with no identity. When a playmate called her a "stupid, ugly, blundering idiot" she was happy — finally she had an image for herself. She fulfilled her identity, failing three grades in school. Her low self-esteem contributed to her marriage at 17 to a man she had known for five weeks.

She felt sure that "children loved parents automatically," but having four children did not solve her problems. When another man offered to pay for her divorce and adopt her children, she jumped at the chance. But that resulted in even more severe problems, as he



MRS. LANSDOWN

physically abused her and their seven children. Mrs. Lansdown's attempts to get help were futile; people rejected her when she told them her problem. Finally, the death of her oldest son and the abandonment of a five-year-old daughter along a freeway brought them to the attention of the police. Mrs. Lansdown said that she was "very relieved that the cycle was going to stop" when she was arrested.

While in prison she asked for psychiatric help. Her counselor told her that if she was sane enough to ask for help she didn't need it. Later she was introduced to a Mothers Anonymous group in the prison.

She credits her recovery to the other women in that group. By this time she took no care of herself, convinced that she was ugly and not worth anything. The women in

her group insisted that she was pretty, this threatened Betty — her self-image was just the opposite. Then she realized that they were sincere and really cared about her. With a new awareness of her own worth she found that her relationships with other people took on new meaning and value.

Mothers Anonymous, now Parents Anonymous, has grown to 300 chapters across the country. The parents meet each week with a professional counselor observing. Anonymity is preserved, as members are identified by first name only. There is no pressure for the couples to talk about their problems, but the groups try to provide a setting in which members feel safe in asking for help. Learning that others have the same problem, and how they handle it, can help people change their own behavior. Members also provide support between meetings, taking children during a crisis, which protects the child and helps the parent get by rough periods.

Experts point out that child abuse is not limited to any particular type of person or economic position. The one factor that seems to be most important is the childhood of the parent. Usually the abusers were abused children themselves, and they are unable to cope with their problems any better than their parents could. Mrs. Lansdown speaks with optimism of the possibility of reaching all child abusers in this generation, thus eliminating the problem from the next.

The Rochester chapter of PA is seeking parents who feel that they must improve their attitudes toward their children. Information about the meetings or immediate help in a crisis can be obtained through Lifeline, 275-5151.

Church Women Set Welfare Meeting

Welfare, Problems and Possibilities is the topic for the 16th annual legislative institute arranged by Church Women United. Dr. Lawrence Berg of Cornell University will be the keynote speaker.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 6, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, East Avenue at Vick Park B. The public is invited. Nursery care will be provided and beverages will be available for lunch.

Dorlene Muhs of the Monroe County Department of Social Services, Steven Brown of Legal Assistance and Mrs. Leona Perrine, a foster parent, will take part in a panel discussion of the welfare situation in the county.

Musical Noontime Series to Resume

The Hochstein Music School at 50 North Plymouth has scheduled four more free concerts in its Wednesday series called Downtown Musical Noontime. The series resumes next Wednesday Jan. 28, with Sounds from the Past, a performance by the school's baroque trio. The half-hour concerts begin at 12:15 p.m.

Also scheduled are two noontime courses for novices. An Introduction to Armchair Score Reading, and Learning to Listen. The former takes place on six consecutive Mondays, beginning Feb. 9; the latter on Thursdays, Feb. 26-April 1. Details may be obtained by calling 454-4596.

PRE-SCHOOL

Our Lady Of Perpetual Help preschool registration for the second semester will be held on Jan. 26. Further information is available through Sister St. Luke at (716) 266-7605.

AS I SEE IT



Pat Costa

In a television season as dreary as this one, the specials must necessarily stand out as beacons in the night. And once in a very great while the special illuminates as to light up the whole sky.

Such is "Eleanor and Franklin," the two-part presentation by ABC Theatre recently shown on Sunday and Monday nights. It is the story of their personal lives intertwined with the public existence.

It is true that I do not approach the subject matter objectively. I grew up having Sunday dinners at my Grandmother Costa's house with pictures of FDR and Pope Pius side by side staring down at us from the walls of the dining room.

Shortly after we were married my husband and I went to Hyde Park and toured the Roosevelt mansion on a weekday so quiet and free of other tourists that one could feel the presence of the vigorous former inhabitants. As with no other historical mansion we had to shake ourselves to step back into the present. Ditto for the adjacent FDR library.

Later I was to read Eleanor Roosevelt's early autobiography in two parts, "This Is My Story" and "This I Remember" originally published in 1937 and 1949 and later yet Joseph Lash's "Eleanor Alone." It was to give Franklin short shrift in my reading so, too, did the TV presentation which while based on Lash's Pulitzer winning "Eleanor and Franklin" told us much more of the former than of the 32nd president of the United States.

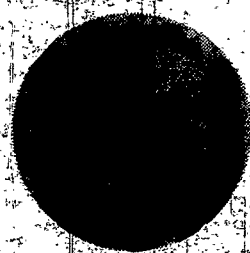
Sponsored by IBM, which felt the show was too good to be shared with other advertisers, the program each night was interrupted only once for a commercial message. The hours sped by as they seldom do on a TV screen. There were flaws of course. Mrs. Roosevelt herself remembered her childhood with kinder feelings than were portrayed here chiefly because of her dead mother's young sisters, the aunts. And incidents in her books which made an indelible impression on me never saw the TV light while other scenes, such as her instant popularity when home from schoolgirl England were obviously pure fiction inserted for better drama. Since they did not alter the historical value of the script, I suppose screenplay writer James Costigan can not be faulted.

As the adult couple, Jane Alexander and Edward Herrmann conveyed the spirit of the famed pair without duplicating actual physical characteristics, although Miss Alexander seemed to have caught Eleanor's high pitched squeak with credible accuracy.

Among the smaller roles those which added the most color were those of Eleanor's Uncle Teddy Roosevelt, her domineering mother-in-law Sara Delano (Rosemary Murphy) and her beloved French teacher Mlle. Souvestre (Lilia Skala). Louis Howe, the campaign manager who with Eleanor was the biggest influence in propelling FDR from cripple's bed to White House, was beautifully done with Ed Flanders in the understated role.

For those who knew Eleanor as an indomitable worker, a public figure, stiff upper lip archetype, the second part must have been an eye opener. This segment concentrated on the affair between her social secretary Lucy Mercer and FDR and the resultant scenes showed clearly that Eleanor was first and foremost a woman completely vulnerable in matters of love. That she had an inner strength to rely on masked that vulnerability to an astonishing degree. It is to everybody's credit that the program showed us the whole human being.

IN THIS CORNER



George Beahon

Hopscotching. The Sports Beat And wondering if '76 could find the Big Four of major league sports wallowing in red ink, stirred up by a potion of rising costs, inflated salaries, declining attendance and the fantastic costs of litigation?

In basketball and hockey, the "second leagues," meaning the ABA and the WHL, are in a losing struggle for survival. The established NBA and NHL are in economic tailspins. They are paying salaries that AVERAGE over \$170,000. They are looking at dwindling turnstile figures. And they are slicing up less revenue from television.

The World Football League folded in '75, easing the payroll problem for the future in the NFL. But the NFL has attendance worries, and now it's headed on a collision course with Congress and/or the Supreme Court because of the Rozelle Rule. It may have to start writing long-term player contracts that will cancel out the advantage of having the WFL out of the picture.

Baseball had a super year, but its litigation expenses are staggering, and increasing. It has the same court problems with its reserve clause, and may also wind up head-to-head with Congress and the Supreme Court.

Baseball "owes" the City of Seattle a franchise. It also "owes" one to Washington, D.C.

So it was a shocker when baseball, the National League in particular, permitted the San Francisco Giants to be lifted out of the Bay Area and transplanted — like right now — to Toronto, Ont.

The NL was tired of paying San Francisco's bills. So it decided to okay a \$13.5 million price offered to financially-troubled owner Horace Stoneham. That's \$9 million for Stoneham, and \$4.5 million in escrow to settle the damage suits coming up for breaking the lease in Candlestick Park.

It solves one problem. The Bay Area could not support both Oakland and San Fran. But the Dodgers lost an established rival, and consider the difference in cost moving a traveling squad from LA to San Fran, and LA to Toronto three times a year.

Seattle is unhappy. Washington is unhappy, and this includes some congressmen with long memories — the baseball-wise Frank Horton in the front row.

International League president George Sisler returned from baseball's winter meetings to confide something that tells you how desperate baseball has to be.

Sisler says the schedule-makers drew up charts that included Toronto, Seattle, and Washington.

All this for 1976 options.

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