

Sarah Child



All in the Family

Not Strangers When You Talk to Them

"For heaven's sake, MOTH-er, do you have to talk to everybody?"

Delivered in unison by both daughters who had accompanied me into the store and stood fidgeting while I made conversation, the above words were not so much a question as an accusation.

Back in the car, both warmed to their grievance. "You act as if every person you meet is an old friend," said the older of the two.

"Yeah," piped up her younger sister from the back seat, "and the things you tell them — REALLY! — our most intimate family secrets."

"I do not," I returned quickly. I sought to justify my habit of engaging near-strangers in small talk.

"It's an old reporter trick," I soothed. "You offer a little bit of information and you get five times the amount back."

"Why on earth do you want to hear about their lives?" asked the older, opening the bag to reexamine the skirt material we had just bought.

"Sometimes it leads to a story," I rationalized. (Ironically, this one eventually did — a 3,000-word article on some new medical treatment the woman's daughter was getting.)

Tired of the subject, the older one turned up the rock station so no conversation was possible. I thought about why I really do what I do.

The truth is that life is so much more, interesting when the body standing next to you in the checkout line, sitting in the doctor's waiting room, browsing through the book stall, becomes a person.

Sometimes the exchange is only a smile or a phrase. Sometimes it lasts for a minute or so. On a plane or train, it can go on for hours.

My habit is a carry-over from having been born and then raised in a succession of small towns. A legacy, if you will.

Not to speak or acknowledge another's presence in a town of less than 2,000 is not only a matter of personal unfriendliness, but could conceivably lead to full scale hostility between extended families.

I have lived in the city — or on the edge of it — for 20 years now, and I suppose if I had wanted to break the habit I could have.

But why? Life is infinitely richer, more varied, more satisfying when you learn the man behind you in the long bank line has already suffered the indignity of a flat tire on the expressway earlier and the woman ahead of you is bringing home her aged father today, the effects of his stroke miraculously gone.

Welfare Raise Passes State Senate Test

Albany — It was a cold Monday in Albany but the State Senate action approving an increase in aid to the needy warmed a lot of hearts. At least as far as the State Catholic Conference and its followers are concerned.

"There has been no increase in the basic grant since 1974," said J. Alan Davitt, executive director of the conference. "And we're pleased to have positive proof by a vote of 34-24 on Senate bill 1007A that the needs of the poor in the state will get legislative attention."

The bill which passed the Senate was introduced by Warren Anderson of Binghamton, majority leader. Since it differs significantly from the proposal by Gov. Hugh Carey it is not clear what kind of reception the bill will get in the Democratic Assembly or from the governor.

Sen. Anderson's bill provides an "energy assistance grant" which will not reduce

the federal food stamp allowance for eligible families. This insures that an increase in state support will not result in a decrease in federal support.

The bill also provides that the state will pick up the local share of the increase (the basic grant is divided among federal, state and local government causing no added burden on economically depressed localities).

The actual increase in the bill is 15 percent. For a family of four that means an increase of \$38 a month or 32 cents per person per day.

Senators from the diocese for the bill:

John D. Perry, 53rd District.

Against the bill:

Fred J. Eckert, 54th District; L. Paul Kehoe, 52nd District; William T. Smith, 51st District; Dale Volker, 58th District.

National Black Leaders Slate Convention Here

The National Association of Black Catholic Administrators will meet in Rochester April 23-25.

The association, founded by Father Jerome Robinson, OP, is composed of 16 Offices of Black Ministries across the country.

Father Robinson was the first director of the diocesan OBM.

According to Rev. John S. Walker, executive secretary of the local office, the agenda will include discussion of the "restoration of parochial education in areas where parochial schools have closed."

Dr. Walker said that the phenomenon of closing parochial schools in heavily black and hispanic areas of cities is noted by OBMs across the country.

He said, "One of the main objectives of OBMs is strengthening the way we urge consideration of reopening parochial schools

The April meeting will be the tenth such for the five-year-old organization.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark and former Rochester City Councilman Ronald Good will address the convention, to be held at the Airport Holiday Inn.

Fisher Hikes Tuition

Trustees of St. John Fisher College announced recently that tuition for the academic year 1981-82 will be \$4166 and room and board will be \$2363. These figures represent increases of 11 and 12 percent respectively. Current charges are \$3753 for tuition and \$2110 for dormitory students.

Father Patrick O. Braden, college president said, "St. John Fisher, like virtually every other independent college across the country, must make adjustments due to inflationary increases in costs for almost every area of our operation.

'Urban Causeway' To Visit Disabled

The third annual Urban Causeway, sponsored by Church Women United, will visit agencies that serve handicapped persons, Friday, April 3.

The tour will begin at 9:30 a.m. at St. Anne's Church and will include stops at the Al Sigl Center and the Monroe Developmental Center.

Further information and reservations are available by calling the group's office, (716) 454-1813.



Director Visits

Msgr. William J. McCormack, left, national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, visited Rochester and Father Joseph Reinhart, local director of the missions, last Tuesday. Msgr. McCormack assumed his title last summer, succeeding Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara of Indianapolis.

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For Further Information Contact the Secretary
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