

# Counselor says marriage is here to stay

By JEFF GOODWIN

Despite more liberal views by society in recent years toward marriage, an enormous amount of pressure still is put on young people to marry, said the counselor-coordinator of the Family Service Association.

Mary Grabowski said young people often are pressured into marriage by their families and friends.

"Society's value systems say that marriage is the goal," Grabowski said. "Our society prompts young people to find a partner to marry."

Grabowski, who has been a counselor for seven years, said people marry for many reasons.

"Some believe in the ideology (of marriage)," she said. "They marry because they want security and

they think marriage will provide that. Some, particularly women, marry because they don't want to figure out how to survive. Some marry because they see marriage as a passage into adulthood."

Grabowski said some of society's attitudes have eased in recent years.

"It used to be that pregnancy was a reason for marriage," she said. "That is less so now that society has changed."

Grabowski said the recent trend of couples who live together before they marry has not necessarily reduced marital problems for those couples.

"So often people who live together say that they didn't know each other until they were married," she said. "I think research will pretty much prove that (living together) doesn't make a lot of difference."

However, Grabowski said living together before marriage sometimes enables couples to decide if they're ready for marriage.

"Couples are putting off the decision to marry," she said. "A generation ago if you lived together you did it very secretly. It was against the law in some cases."

Having children and the stress of their leaving home later also can be hard on a marriage, she said. Older couples often find they have lost touch with each other after their children have left home.

Grabowski said she predicts that in the future one or more of the parents in many families may have remarried.

"Step families or blended families are quickly becoming the norm," she said. "Ninety to 95 percent of the babies born this year will spend part of their life in a one-parent family."

Parents need to raise their children to make their own decisions, Grabowski said.

"Parents need to let children know they have a right to make decisions about their life," she said. "They need to know they don't have to make decisions out of insecurity."

Grabowski said couples should have common interests. They also should be able to trust each other.

"Their parents should be someone who has first become a friend," she said. "It should be someone they share goals with and values with."

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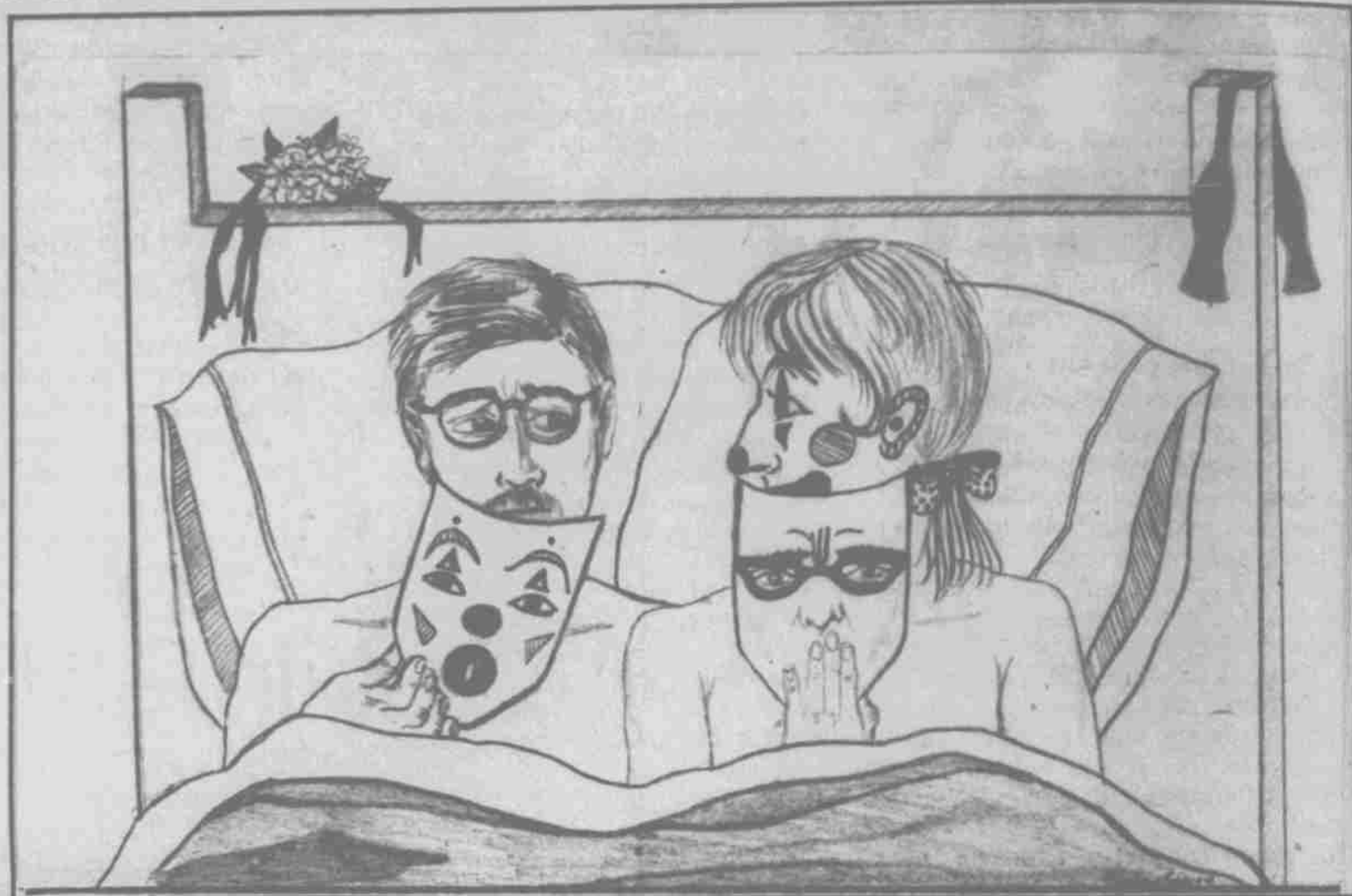
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