

An Unruly Youth Is Someone's Child

NEWS items often suggest the adage, "Every generation gets the kind of children it deserves." Two appeared the same day recently.

One related how southside residents in Oklahoma City are "up in arms" over speeding cars in residential areas. Another told how 33 Stillwater boys were paddled and 16 girls put to work sweeping out the high school parking lot because they cut classes to drink beer at a nearby lake. Most parents approved.

If City Councilman Harold G. McEwen had made a citywide survey, people in all parts of town would have told him about speeders who race around their neighborhoods in violation of the law and in utter disregard of the safety of others.

In such cases, the driver may be telling the world that his (or her) parents neglected to teach him that he is responsible for his acts and how he should discipline himself to carry out his responsibilities. Most of them mean to do no harm but their thoughtlessness may be deadly and costly.

The lust for speed is not peculiar to the present younger generation. Old timers can remember when young men raced their horses around school houses or churches while meetings were in progress. Sometimes they fired pistols into the air but more often they just yelled to get people to notice them. Occasionally charges were filed and fines assessed for disturbing the peace.

Today, powerful, speedy automobiles are used for the same purposes—to attract attention to immature, insecure or irresponsible youth.

Even without a car, they manage.

A 24-year old California driver was charged with driving while under the influence of alcohol on a bicycle. His drivers license had been suspended for previous violations, but he still wanted people to notice him.

Most youngsters never get into serious trouble of any kind, but statistics show that juveniles under 18 are held responsible for 51 per cent of total arrests for property crimes, 23 per cent of violent crimes, and 45 per cent of all serious crimes. Police Chief I.G. Purser says that many youngsters commit offenses as adventures, knowing that their age will protect them.

Whether the old-fashioned practice of paddling the backsides of Stillwater school boys will change their ways or not, they will remember the

occasion. They have gained the attention they sought and learned that some things do not meet with universal approval.

Courts, law enforcement officers and counsellors have pointed out that many delinquent youths resort to their rebellious ways because their home life does not offer security, love and understanding.

No doubt, the reason that many parents do not pass along to their children these qualities which both generations may really want is that the previous generation didn't teach what is right, personal responsibility and self-discipline, either. It's never too late to try to improve.

Which brings us back to the adage, "Every generation gets the kind of children it deserves."