

## Home on the Radar Range

With the advancement of technology, men have explored the unknown regions of outer space. More efficient mass transportation methods have been developed. Small businesses are equipped with up-to-date computers and word processing equipment. Even the average household is filled with all the conveniences money can buy. Modern technology is responsible for these new developments, but it is also largely responsible for the decline of the close-knit American family.

It may be true that, as individuals, family members have more advantages due to advanced technology. The head of the household now needn't spend hours on financial matters; a simple hand calculator can save him time on keeping up the budget, paying the bills, and balancing the checkbook. The homemaker can cut down on time spent on household duties with the help of a portable dishwasher, a microwave oven, and numerous electrical cooking and cleaning devices. Modern conveniences create more free time for her to pursue a career, attend school, or simply watch soap operas. The children in an American family have greater educational advantages due to technology. They can borrow Dad's calculator to do math assignments accurately, watch educational television, or study with the aid of a home computer.

While new developments in technology may provide advantages for the individual family member, they stunt the growth of the family unit. For example, school-age children learn more advanced methods than their parents learned. It is difficult for a child, therefore, to relate to his parents what he learned in data processing class or business machines class; the modern equipment and methods are probably unknown to the parents. A child was once able to ask for help with homework or share his school experiences, but now a communication gap has developed between parent and child in this area.

With technology, the routines of everyday home life are simpler, but are far less gratifying to the family as a whole. For example, the modern heating process in a home is triggered by the flip of a switch or the turn of a dial. Without this expensive convenience, a family might opt to drive into the woods to cut firewood. This chore could be viewed as an excursion, complete with fresh air, exercise, and teamwork. At the end of this adventure, the family would feel refreshed, satisfied, and closer to one another. After the tiring excursion, the family could return home to feast on a meal of fresh food prepared with loving care, or using modern methods, they could eat processed food or frozen TV dinners warmed in a microwave oven.

So while modern technology supposedly advances the American people as a whole, it actually interferes with the closeness, communication, and growth of the family unit. If people first learn to work as a team at home, then they can use their knowledge of communication methods, their skills in the completion of everyday tasks, and their willingness to participate in group efforts to a greater advantage in the outside world. The progress that can be made in America with these attributes would surely be a leap for man.