

Success is family affair with Macks

By Andrew Caffrey

A few of the things the Mack family, of Beverly Road, is working on today: preventing nuclear war; examining the development of the psyche in a nuclear age; attempting to break down stereotypes nations have of each other; promoting goodwill missions and better understanding between youths whose countries are at odds; working toward improved health care for young families; and an Eastern approach to body healing.

Sally and John Mack, the parents, even have time for a weeknight exercise class.

This is a family whose work centers around the Big Questions, people who have combined their personal convictions about the way things ought to be with a professional advocacy that has taken them places and gotten results.

Consider this:

John, 56, a psychiatrist whose book on Lawrence of Arabia, *A Prince of our disorder: the life of T.E. Lawrence*, won the Pulitzer Prize for biography in 1977, is a member of the Boston-based International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), which was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace earlier this month.



The logo of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Inc.

His work with IPPNW involved breaking down cultural stereotypes, stereotypes that have been used to justify the arms race.

"What most interests me now," he said in an interview last week, "is the rigidity of the thinking and the inability of nations and ordinary people to shift the way they look at things, even though an extraordinary technical revolution has taken place."

Currently John Mack is involved in a project at Cambridge Hospital, where he works, that does research and public education about psychology in a nuclear age.

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Sally, 53, is a social worker who has worked with community self-help groups on the delivery of health care, and with child-bearing families on adult-child development. Through the American Friends Service Committee, she has worked for bettering relations between Arab and Israeli youth. Locally she is a member of the Mothers Against the Draft.

Of her work, she says, "I'm an advocate, but more than that, I want to be an enabler of people becoming an advocate for themselves."

Kenny, the second of their three boys, is a student at Hampshire College who is perhaps best known here for his 1982 booklet, *Brookline, Nuclear Weapons and You*, a town-authorized publication that details the impact that the explosion of a nuclear device would have on the area, and of the folly of the federal government's evacuation plan for Brookline.

Kenny's been busy lately. Over the summer, the 23-year-old was a prime mover in a program that brought



together 10 American youths with eight Soviet youths in an expedition that climbed Mount Elbrus, Europe's highest mountain. The purpose of the mission was to promote understanding between the two cultures, and to prove they can join together to overcome adversity. The three-week expedition is expected to be made into a feature-length film, 13 minutes of which was recently aired on public television's *McNeil-Lehrer Hour*.

It was Kenny's second visit to the Caucasus mountain range, his third to the Soviet Union, and was just one of the many trips abroad he has taken to learn and understand other cultures. He has spent a month picking coffee beans on a collective in Nicaragua.

According to his parents, Kenny, also an accomplished drummer, is studying Third World economics at Hampshire.

Danny, the eldest son, is studying holistic health at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado. He has an interest, his parents said, in healing other people.

The youngest son, Tony, 22, is a student at the University of Michigan, is active in political affairs and is majoring in social studies.

Although both parents are highly skilled professionals with advanced educations, John Mack said he has never had any "specific expectations" for his three sons.

"They've put a lot of emphasis, all of them, into living that kind of balanced life. You know, having some fun. None of them have been active [academic] grinds. If anything I think there's been a certain resistance to conventional higher education tracts."

All of the three, he said, took time off between high school and college to explore other things.

Sally adds that the three "are not literal about group standards of accomplishment. I think they do want to be knowledgeable and do well, but I think they don't necessarily feel you have to go to an Ivy League school."

Normally, John Mack acknowledges, suburban families do not get involved in such global issues. But the discovery of the atom changed that, he contends, because the stakes ultimately are so high, it's impossible for "non-political" people not to become involved.

The anti-nuclear movement is "an awakening of the people into what a democracy was supposed to be anyway."



John and Sally Mack and their children comprise a family concerned with the Big Questions.