Tales are a form of closeness, intimacy

Professor's new book subject of gossip

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Pro-essor Patricia Spacks is writing a her topic and people found it so book on gossip. Today, she could almost bite her tongue. Just between you, me and the s is a viole my publicity now would be pre-

from city

nan for M

fascinating, she was soon in demand as a speaker.

"I talked, talked, talked and of police amppost, she won't finish the invalidation book until next year. As an extra book until next year. As an extra book until next year. As an extra book until next year. got into trouble

saw an announcement of a talk the Yale University professor was going to give to a women's studies group. The reporter wrote a story that the newspaper

carried on page one. That almost stopped the prot into trouble." fessor from talking to any more
It seems Carolyn Wyman, a reporters, but she agreed to an almost anything.

"I think there is real kills."

ledge in gossip," Spacks said.

"There's no question but that the will; Snidely and Debbie are getting married; Margo is pregetting married; Margo is pregetting married; Margo is pregetting married. "I think there is real knowfor many people. I think that's a positive value

She said gossip can be about

gnant; Bea told Barney she was having an affair, and he wanted to know if it was going to be ca-

- Snidely and Debbie broke

that gear-head kid, Kenny, got a

ticket for speeding; the judge said it should have been for flying too low.

There's only one subject for gossip and that's people," Spacks said, recalling a Harvard audience and a man who wanted

her to say gossip could be talk

"But gossip does not talk ab-out ideas, it talks about people," she said. "As far as what the people do, gossip has traditionally been about sex because sex is one of the most interesting

things people do."
She said people gossip because it's a form of association, a form of closeness, a form of investigation. "It's the need of human beings to congregate and to hear the sound of one another's voices," she said.

Gossip has been frowned on for 200 years in most places, with parents telling children not to do it. She says that's "partly because of its association with malice and partly because of its association with trivia."

She says the material of the realistic novel is the material of gossip and has been from the beginning. In the 18th century, actual scandal about people's lives was incorporated into works of fiction.

"I'm also interested in the fact that many novels are about gossip in one way or another, which is a different point," she said.
"It's not that the authors use the material of gossip, but they deal with people gossiping with one another as a mode of communication.

She said the most gratifying thing that has happened since beginning her research is the avalanche of assistance she has received, some of it from stran-

"It's extraordinary the amount of help I'm getting from all kinds of people," she said. When I'm writing a book, I keep a running list of people I'm going to give acknowledgments to. Already, I've gotten a huge

Originally, gossip was a good word, meaning godparent. It moved from that to mean close friend, still of either sex. Gradually, it came more and more to mean woman friend, she said.

Dr. Samuel Johnson's first English language dictionary in 1755 gave it three meanings. The third was defined as "one who runs about tattling like women at a lying-in," or prepar-ing for a birth. This meant the gossip was someone who talks like a woman among women.

Savings mergers possible

United Press International

HOUSTON - State and federal officials are likely to merge 20 ailing Texas savings and loan associations rather than permit them to close, a financial leader

S. Don Norris, chief executive of Commonwealth Savings and president of the Greater Houston Savings & Loan League, said Monday the fact that many state-chartered S&Ls are losing money should not

come as a surprise.

"Many are losing money, (but) their net worth can carry them for some time," Norris

Texas Savings and Loan Commissioner L. Alvis Vandyg-riff has said he is monitoring the financial condition of 20 unnamed savings institutions. About 65 percent of the state's chartered S&Ls are losing money, Vandygriff said over the weekend.

He said he has no plans to close them soon, but wants to watch them closely for signs of further trouble.

However, both Vandygriff and Norris said there is strong interest by outsiders in gaining a foothold in the Texas market.

'We understand Texas and Florida institutions are the most sought-after by the big California and New York savings and loans," Norris said. "There is a real market value in Texas savings and loans charters. We probably have the best financial powers in Texas.

Last month, the state S&L commission ordered five institutions closed, and turned them over to the Federal Savings & Loan Insurance Corp. Within minutes of the order, the federal agency found a buyer in Home Savings of California, a Los

Angeles institution. Business leaders nationwide said savings institutions are having problems because about twothirds of their deposits are in costly market-rate accounts. But almost as much of their mortgage portfolios are earning less than 10 percent.

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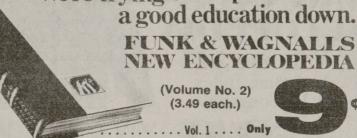


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