

moral perspectives

Rev. Lloyd Buss

Litter sure sign of social decay

IF BURYING the dead is the first sign of culture, what is the first sign of culture's demise?

Archaeologists have been able to help us date the first burial of humans. Who will help us date the beginning of its end?

I risk the observation that our culture's death has begun with the pernicious habit of discarding our fast-food wrappers and containers wherever we have finished with them. Be it parking lot, sidewalk, playing field or roadside, we have turned our living space into one massive garbage dump.

One can speculate over the reasons for our ancestors' first burying of the dead. Perhaps it was their regard for the life shared. Perhaps it was a regard for the environment. Perhaps it was both. One could not exist without the other. They knew the interdependence of life.

Burying the dead was part of their order for life.

ORDER HAS always been important in the Judeo-Christian conceptualization of life. The creation stories in Genesis concentrate on the ordering of light and darkness and water and land and trees and days.

The universe is not simply to exist because of its individual parts. The universe is an integrated whole, with all of its members/parts in relationships.

Stewardship of life has thus been a fundamental part of the Judeo-

Christian heritage. Regard for life was regard for all its parts. The care of life was the care one gave to all its parts.

The care of the environment was no less important than the care one gave to people. One could not exist without the other.

RECENT NEWS stories and pictures of people scavenging the garbage dumps in the Philippines, Brazil, Egypt, et al. for their daily survival are abhorrent to our order for life. There is something radically amiss in our care and regard for one another.

But until our indignation turns into forceful action that offers order and care for them, these people remain victims of the world we have fashioned out of our refuse.

Some will consider this an extreme response to a simply annoying problem. Fast-food wrappers and containers strewn along public thoroughfares should not be regarded as signs with ultimate consequence. We should consider them simply as the signs of careless people. *Caveat emptor.*

Gardening series at OCC

Master gardener Jerry Baker will discuss fall gardening techniques and how to prepare your garden for spring on Monday, Sept. 28.

The two-hour program, sponsored by the Highland Lakes Campus of Oakland Community College, will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Student Center Arena.

Admission is \$5. To make reservations, call OCC at 360-3041.

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Compost: cheap way to fertilize

Q What is composting?

A. Composting is the breakdown of organic material (plant or animal) until it's ready to be used as nourishment by plants. Leaves, weeds, grass clippings, fruit and vegetable trimmings, coffee grounds and tea leaves all break down naturally. By composting, the process is just speeded up.

Q Why should we compost?

A. Composting creates a rich organic fertilizer, solves disposal problems, and will save you money.

Q What is the correct way to compost?

A. To put it simply, layer your compost materials in approximately 5-inch layers, mix with dirt and water, and provide air.

Composting can be done in a hole, free-standing (as in a pile), or in a garbage can punched with holes.

Exercise, relaxation instead of drugs

Dear Jo:

At my mother's last visit to her doctor, he did not renew her prescription for tranquilizers for her "nerves." He suggested that she join an exercise group and to try and learn to relax on her own. Is this a common prescription these days?

Mrs. N.

Dear Mrs. N.:

I do not know how long or how often your mother has been taking tranquilizers, but I would like to congratulate her doctor for refusing to renew her prescription. So many older persons take this medication unnecessarily and habitually.

Please encourage your mother to follow her doctor's orders for exercise and relaxation, she will note an improvement in her health, I'm sure.

Many health care professionals are looking at non-pharmacologic (non-drug) therapies for common complaints of aging.

Dr. Wieman, the project director of geriatrics at the Upstate Medical Center, Binghamton, N.Y., addressed this subject in the June 1986 Geriatrics Journal. He suggests several activities that can be used as remedies for tiredness, apathy, loss of ap-

consumer mailbag



Terry Gibb

Each day dump in your compostibles and cover with a little soil. Once a week, turn the contents with a shovel to mix and add air. In about seven weeks, it should be ready to use.

Lime, phosphate or manure will speed up the decomposition process. Keep your compost damp by occasionally spraying with water, but do not soak it.

Q What things can I put in the compost pile?

A. Grass clippings, leaves, dryer lint, feathers, tea bags, egg shells, toilet paper, shredded newspaper (not colored comics), rinds, coffee

grounds, hair, potato skins, corn cobs, sawdust.

Do NOT use in a compost pile: meats and meat fats, bones and twigs.

Q How does the garbage bag composting method work?

A. The method is called "anaerobic" composting because it is done without the addition of oxygen.

Fill your garbage bag with compost materials. Add a few shovels of dirt, one shovel of lime, and two shovels of manure. Water the contents, tie the bag tightly to eliminate any air, roll the bag a little to mix the

contents and let it set for about a month (longer in cold weather).

Q Can I compost in winter?

A. Yes. You can use the just mentioned garbage bag method or the traditional method.

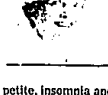
Combine your pile in the fall and cover it with black plastic. After three weeks, turn it over with a shovel, water it well, re-cover with the black plastic and let it work through the winter.

Q How can I use the compost?

A. Seedlings can be started in new compost. Spread compost over your entire garden area to add nutrients to garden plants. Compost can be mixed around the base of trees, plants and flowers instead of expensive fertilizer.

The Consumer Mailbag answers your questions. Address mail to The Consumer Mailbag, Concern Detroit, 1025 Shelby, Detroit 48226.

gerontology



A. Jolayne Farrell

tiredness, insomnia and anxiety.

Tiredness can be decreased by carefully monitored exercise. For apathy, he recommends group activities, volunteerism and adult education opportunities.

Loss of appetite is remedied by adding a variety of spices (not more salt) to food, and by taking cooking classes.

Insomnia, perhaps the most common complaint, can be helped by increasing daytime activities, hobbies or crafts, reading, television and correspondence.

And lastly, he suggests clergy referral, support groups, distracting activities, exercise, dance groups, sports, and movies for (as in your mother's case) anxiety.

In the last year or so, I have no-

ticed a definite trend in health care of the elderly toward fewer medications and more practical suggestions on how to improve one's quality of life. Much of the responsibility for this is being put on older persons themselves — which is a very good approach.

Dear Jo:

How often should persons over age 65 have their eyes examined?

Mr. M.G.

Northern Reader,

Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at P.O. Box 66, Postal Station G, 1075 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario M4M 3E8, Canada.

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