

We've lost taste for real thing

SOME years ago, a giant food processor spent millions of dollars trying to recapture the natural flavor of tomatoes, the purpose being to win a significant section of the market for ketchup.

This costly and tedious process culminated in what the producers considered a perfect aromatic substitute. An impressive promotion campaign ensued.

But consumers carefully avoided the new product, and it was a miserable failure.

COMPANY executives sought an explanation.

According to reports, the new process eliminated the slightly scorched flavor inevitably acquired from the old, imperfect methods of preparation. To the astonishment of the manufacturer, it was precisely this flavor that the consumer had accepted as "the real thing."

To meet this challenge, new equipment was readjusted to overcook the sauce and restore its imperfection. When the old flavor returned, sales soared.

Despite interest in organic, natural foods, producers claimed the majority of Americans are so accustomed to mass-produced, simulated, artificially flavored and colored



moral perspectives
Rabbi Irwin Groner

foods that they have lost their taste for authenticity.

We have grown accustomed to ketchup's artificial taste.

IN OUR homogenized society, one wonders how far the process of simulation has invaded the spectrum of reality.

Have we substituted appearance for genuineness, image for integrity, cleverness for compassion? Have we lost our taste for decency, beauty, truth, morality?

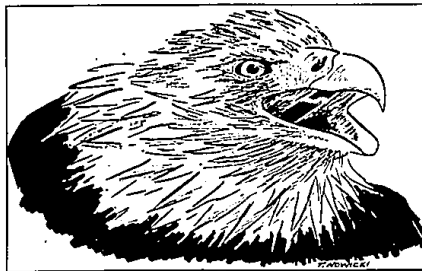
The world of advertising has shaped our thinking. Remember the jingle for Coca Cola that began, "I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony." Then the words "Coke is the real thing."

All the religions of mankind have tried to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony — and have failed. Harmony cannot come from a bottle of Coke.

When people create a faith so strong and so loving that they do not need to be fearful or envious of each other, then, perhaps, the world can begin to learn how to sing together in harmony.

Rabbi Irwin Groner is with Shaarey Zedek Congregation in Southfield.

An encyclopedia for bird lovers



An eagle graces the cover of "The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds" by John K. Terres.

Rebate checks in mail

The state Treasury Department has begun mailing 1988 homestead property tax rebate checks to senior citizens who filed early.

"This is the third straight year we have been able to send property tax rebate checks to seniors before they have to pay their December property tax bill," said state treasurer Robert Bowman. The Treasury Department has delivered to the postal sys-

tem 1,993 senior rebate checks totaling \$1.2 million.

Before 1986, Bowman said, seniors and all other Michigan residents received their property tax rebates in the spring after filing their income tax returns. By receiving their credit checks early, seniors are assured of having enough money to make their winter tax payments to local governments.

UNLIKE many hobbies, an interest in nature does not require a great deal of equipment. For naturalists, not having to buy a lot of expensive equipment is an advantage. But it is hard for those who may want to buy them gifts at Christmas.

Beyond appropriate clothing for hiking through the seasons — which most nature lovers already have — a pair of binoculars is a good gift. Once you have them, they will last a lifetime — if cared for.

ALTHOUGH YOU do not need books to enjoy nature, they are very helpful in expanding one's appreciation.

The more I know about something, the more I enjoy and appreciate it. Since trees and birds cannot communicate some of their interesting facts — no matter how long we look at them — it is helpful to learn what others have learned.

And because there are always new things being learned, books are a potential gift for any occasion, for years to come.

Without question, the best place to experience nature is in the field. But we can enhance our experience if we learn, through reading, how to interpret some of the things we see and encounter.

FOR THOSE interested in birds, I recommend "The National Audubon Society's Encyclopedia of Birds" by John K. Terres.

nature



Timothy Nowicki

Topics are organized according to the alphabet like any encyclopedia or dictionary. Basic subjects like feathers or migration are written in a non-technical manner. Terres has authored many books and has a skill for organization and explanation.

Many common or colloquial terms are cross-referenced. Throughout the book, many of the author's references are cited. In the back of the book is a complete listing of these references if you wanted to read more.

Not only does this book provide information about birds in general, but it also has a lengthy description of each bird found in North America. Each description provides information on plumage, behavior, nests, eggs, size and range of the bird.

Besides the verbal description, there is a color photograph of the bird.

This book goes far beyond a field guide to birds. Although it is expensive, it is an endless source of information to enhance your appreciation.

The writer is staff naturalist at Independence Oaks County Park.

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