

FEAR AND LOAFING

Garbage in . . . garbage out . . .

By Karl Nilsson
special writer



Karl Nilsson

The Amazon rain forest is shrinking. The hole in the ozone layer is growing. And closer to home, America is running out of places to dispose of its garbage.

That's not surprising when you consider the average person throws away more than a half ton of trash each year. Mercifully, much of our worst junk is kept out of the overcrowded landfills by rotating from garage sale to another.

Research has shown that the largest single source of garbage is network television. But the second biggest culprit is right in your own backyard. In fact, it is your backyard — with its endless supply of grass clippings and leaves.

In a noble effort to reduce this organic overload, enlightened suburbs are turning to municipal "composting." To make this possible, residents now place their grass clippings in special biodegradable plastic bags for pickup.

The plastic itself is your everyday garden variety linear density polyethylene. (You probably know that.) But what turns this sack of the future into a bag lady's nightmare is a secret additive made from cornstarch, vegetable oil and fast-food byproducts.

A unique blend of hydrogen, carbon and cheeseburgers, this ordinary looking bag excuses itself and politely disintegrates when its contents begin to ferment.

According to scientists, the smart molecular structure of the new bags is designed to spontaneously "break down" after a specified time. This is basically the same thing that happens to your automobile the day your warranty expires.

Granted, if you've ever owned a disposable car before, this self-destruction trick may sound like a big deal, but believe me, it is.

HERE'S WHY. Normal, uneducated trash bags hang around longer than relatives from Cleveland. The tin cans and glass bottles you tossed out this week will still be intact somewhere centuries from now. And while your natural catfish boots may turn to mush before you do, synthetic products like plastic milk jugs and styrofoam cups can survive thousands of years.

Smelling big profits, so to speak,

several large manufacturers are cashing in on the compost crisis. However, the new biodegradable technology is not without its own risks. Strict quality control and precise formulation is necessary. Add too much of the organic trace elements and WHAMMO — the entire disintegration process can occur in a matter of seconds.

Now, here comes the scary part. In their rush to the marketplace, at least one greedy conglomerate was caught taking product shortcuts. During a mix-up at shift change, two boxes of biodegradable additives were inadvertently added to a variety of plastic and rubber products.

The results of this industrial faux pas could be disastrous: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. The landing gear has dissolved. Please return your seats to the upright position . . ."

Modern conveniences dependent on plastic could grind to a halt. "When you're through mopping up that puddle on the floor, can I use your phone? You mean the puddle is the phone?"

If you think these scenarios are too far-fetched, consider these seemingly unrelated incidents:

- A STOCKBROKER was arrested for indecent exposure yesterday when his suspender suddenly exploded during intense trading.
- The service department at an auto dealer remains puzzled by a rash of decomposing dashboards.
- Eight boaters narrowly escaped drowning on Orchard Lake when their rubber raft unexpectedly turned into Jell-O.
- Traffic on I-75 was tied up again this morning when the direct on a crowded bus mysteriously melted.

Fearing a general panic, our government is reluctant to acknowledge the full consequence of this chemical switcheroo. Brace yourself for the awful truth — everything from dentures to lawn furniture is decomposing a million years ahead of schedule.

Fortunately, there is a bright side to all of this. About half the credit cards issued last year are expected to liquify just before the holiday shopping season.

STREET SENSE

You, not relationship, is problem

Dear Barbara,

I am dating a man 10 years older than myself. He has two children. There is no problem with the age gap, but there is with the experience gap. He has already experienced marriage and two kids. I have not had either experience.

We have a lot of great things going on and I'm really crazy about him. The problem is that he has had a vasectomy and that he does not want any more children. I'm not positive that I want children, but I am only 27 and don't want to limit myself.

Is this relationship futile?

Farmington
Dear Farmington,

The problem is not the relationship but your indecisiveness. Either you are crazy about him and want to marry him and not have children, or you do not want to limit yourself to a life without children. One or the other, you can't have both.

If you can resolve your own ambivalence, you will be able to make a decision with, I hope, conviction. Do not make the mistake of staying with him because you think you can change him. You could waste a lot of years, narrow your options and still not have achieved your goal.

Dear Barbara,

This week my sister's friend told her that our father made a pass at her when she was 21. She is 33 now. She told my sister that our father took her out to lunch, bought her a hamburger and a bottle of wine and then told her he has wanted to "get into her pants" since she was little. Betty has always been sexy.

My question is, do I need to worry about my daughter who is 12 and also sexy?

My father is a warm and affectionate man. He hugs and kisses me, but has never been inappropriate in any way.

Nancy
Dear Nancy,

What you need to do is talk to your

daughter and continue to educate her in the facts of life. This is what any mother of a 12-year-old must do, even when the pre-teen isn't sexy.

Your problem doesn't lie with your father but with the sexual education of your daughter. You will have to accept or reject your father as he is.

Deanne Glins-Grunberg, a family life education consultant, suggests that you use methods that seem more ambiguous than confronting. Don't ask specific personal questions. Respect your daughter's privacy while letting her know that you are available for discussions.

Ask her about the lyrics of songs she listens to. Point out how women are stereotyped in the media. Talk about your early experiences with your bodily changes and ask how her friends are coping with theirs.

Books by Linan Madaris and Peter Mayle are excellent for helping to increase her knowledge. Others that can be helpful at "The Teenage Sur-



Barbara Schiff

vival Book" by Sal Gordon and "What's Happening to me" and "Talking with Your Teenager" by Ruth Bell.

Barbara

She knew house would be B & B

Continued from Page 1

the plants growing gaily out of an old pair of tennis shoes on the porch.

In the morning and evening, there are usually a few guests on the blue wing-backed couch, the red wing chairs and in the rocking chair between the fireplace and the television set.

Two of the bedrooms are right there at the foot of the stairs that lead up to a single bedroom and two large ones on the second floor.

Most B & B owners love historic touches and this one is no exception. Jane may not know how to decorate or cook, but you would never prove it to the 10 people gathered around the long breakfast table under a sunny window in the blue and white dining room.

There's Code in an appropriately old-fashioned dress, whipping up her ivy-course breakfast in a modern kitchen full of burnished wooden cupboards.

IF THINGS are really busy, her mother, Julie, might be there. Julie moved upstate from Royal Oak two years ago and now lives six blocks away from Heritage House.

There's a nice nip of fall in the air now, and guests who come from Muskegon, Kalamazoo and Florida are heading out to explore the local attractions. Deer hunters and fishermen are already reserved for the season.

Many bed and breakfast places close down when the air starts to smell of snow, but this is ski country

and the clientele will switch to skiers as soon as the chair lifts start to run.

Cord works the chair lifts at a private ski resort during the day and runs her B & B by night in the winter.

She takes ski groups and families (up to 20 guests in a pinch) as well as individual travelers as long as they will all fit in her five-bedroom house.

At this time of year, weekend rates are \$50 for two, including that full two-course breakfast. Midweek, until Memorial Day, that goes down to \$39. The corporate rate, Monday through Thursday until Memorial Day is \$25 to \$35.

Code also offers packages — fly fishing, golf, cross-country skiing, art-and-auction tours and other packages.

WILL YOU like this kind of bed-and-breakfast? Maybe, maybe not.

If you like a clean, comfortable bed with a bathroom down the hall (or around the corner from the living room on the main floor), with a hostess who really wants to make you comfortable and a crowd of friendly folks around the fireplace or at the breakfast table, you'll love Heritage House.

If not, there is always a chain motel down the road. But don't expect to creep out of your room at dawn to make your own early morning coffee at a roadside motel. You can't do it.

For reservations, contact Jane Code, Heritage House, 521 E. Main, Gaylord, Mich. 49735 or telephone (517) 732-1199.

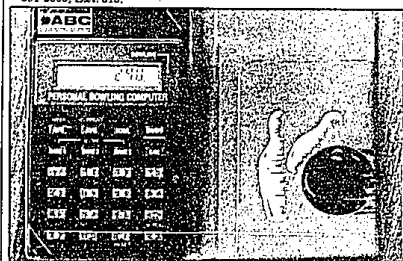


MICKY JONES

Jane Cord works the chair lifts at a private ski resort during the day and runs her B & B by night in the winter.

street seen

Our intrepid Street Seen reporter is always looking for the unusual and welcomes comments and suggestions from readers and entrepreneurs. Send those to this column in care of this newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or call 591-2300, Ext. 313.



Spare the work

A simple, easy-to-use minicomputer permits you to keep a constant record of your league bowling scores for the entire season. Here's some of the other items it helps with: calculates and updates your weekly average, displays the cumulative for all 37 weeks, provides convenience and accuracy for league scoring. And if that isn't enough, it also can be used as a four-function arithmetic calculator. \$14.99. Sears, Roebuck & Co. stores.

Women in business

A valuable reference directory of business women in Michigan. This directory helps to find needed services and products or to sell your service or products. The directory also includes informative data such as financing resources, licensing information, business networking and trade associations. \$12.95. For a copy, contact Michigan Women, 648-5575.



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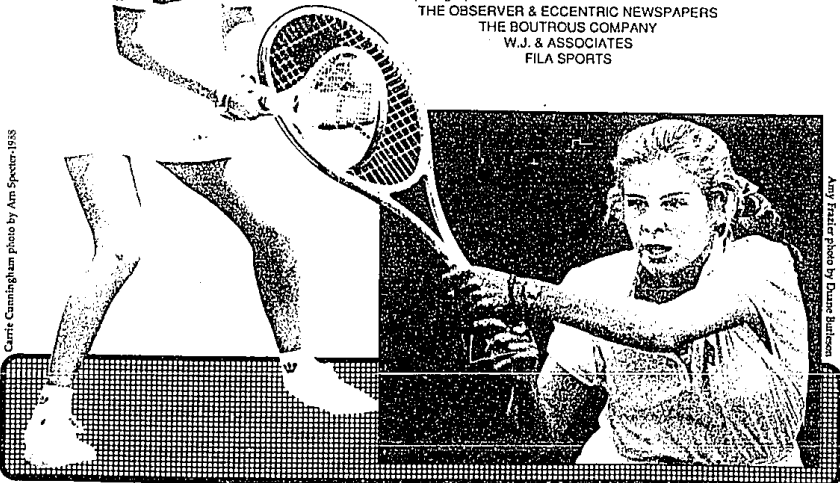
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