

Caring should be year-around

Thursday, January 17, 1985 O&E

(O&E)

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS have been plucked or packed away. There may be a wreath hanging on a lamp post or two, but mainly the holidays of December '84 are a memory.

That's the way it is with our fast-paced life. The trappings of yesterday's rituals become a kind of clutter unless, of course, we have carefully packaged them for when they can again have meaning. All of this is OK except for one thing. There is one item that should not have been packed away at all.

Barely three or four weeks ago there was, as there is every holiday season, a great to-do over feeding the hungry around town. Bells for bucks rang in front of shopping spots. Canned goods were collected.

Speeches were made and newspapers were sold in behalf of hungry children and desperate parents. It is almost as if poverty was born in December and died before the new year.

WE MIGHT KNOW where the decorations have gone or maybe we don't care. But where have the poor gone? About that we should care. If what we did with our religious symbols had any meaning beyond annual nostalgia, then the poor cannot be packed away with the ornaments.

The children, the elderly and the in-between are



perspectives

Rev. Robert Schaden

In as much need of food and warmth in January, February and March as they are during the holidays. In fact, the need may be more critical since these months of winter doldrums do not seem to produce as much enthusiasm for helping as the holiday weeks do.

While the bells are ringing and the lights are blinking there is a certain high for those who reach out to help someone else. But responding to the same need the rest of the year quickly becomes drudgery.

PERHAPS the answer does not lie in a multitude of food and clothing drives to be kicked off every week, but that does not mean there is no answer. Nor does it mean that we can be satisfied that we have done our thing in December.

On the one hand, most of us eat pretty well. Being hungry means that we had a late lunch. Nor

is warmth a problem. Being cold means setting the thermostat back to 68 before we decide which sweater to wear.

It is not that we are mean or even uncaring. But for the most part, sharing is more of a project than it is an ongoing way of life. The poor become the inheritors of our leftovers rather than the recipients of our concern. But what are they to do if the sweater that would warm them is not yet old enough to be given away?

IT IS AN EFFORT to get to one of those clothing drop boxes or food distribution centers. But does it take any more effort than going to the supermarket or the mall?

Beyond all of that there is another possible answer. It lies with staying on top of the issues of concern in our state and national legislatures. Many of those issues affect poverty levels in our own country and around the world. If we could be as enthusiastic about conducting them over these matters as we are about those things that affect our own backyard we might make more difference than all the food or clothing drives put together.

Some of this might even shorten next year's holiday food lines. It might also warm a fellow traveler on the journey of the human condition sometime in the month of January.

Grandchildlessness is bothersome

Dear Jo:

Thank you for suggesting volunteer work to the older lady who wrote you about feeling "deprived" because she didn't have any grandchildren.

My in-laws suffer from this same "deprived feeling" because my husband and I didn't have any children. I often wonder why they had such a small family (two sons) since they seem to be so in need of having children around; the more children they would have had, the greater their chances would be of having grandchildren.

They were in their early 50s when we were married and could have adopted an orphan from another country if they'd truly wanted to. Instead, they waited for us to bring them some children — and we didn't. Now, after 20 long years, they are still asking "deprived." We really don't owe anyone any children.

I wish people like my in-laws and the lady who wrote you would dwell less on the lack of grandchildren and more on what they could contribute to others in the community. My own mother (and perhaps I am biased) never mentions my childless state — instead she lives a busy,



gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell

caring unselfish life — always involved with others.

Maybe young people should be fostered-minded and think about the prospects of having grandchildren early in their lives and then perhaps plan to have larger families.

I have often felt hurt, but never guilty, throughout my married life for not living up to the expectations of my in-laws. I have found their attitude downright offensive on a matter that is really none of their business.

Thanks, Jo, for letting me blow off steam and for letting me express the other point of view.

Birmingham reader

Dear Birmingham reader:

I appreciate your presenting the "other point of view and sharing your feelings with us."

Write to Jolayne Farrell at P.O. Box 66, Postal Station G., 1075 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Dear Jo:

I read with interest your article about a 50-year-old woman who was concerned about her aging hands. You recommended glycerine. My grandmother, too, used glycerine and rose water made up specially for her by her druggist.

She was a woman who always cared about her looks and weight — and always wore high heels. Her routine was to clean the house every morning; then at 1 p.m. came the Pond's face cream and a hair and oil of bed she went for a two-hour rest.

She applied the glycerine and rose water to her hands several times daily — she kept the medicine bottle by the kitchen sink. So, your glycerine suggestions, Jo, brought back some very pleasant memories of a woman I knew and loved from a very early age — and yes, she did have lovely skin.

Mrs. P.K., Ann Arbor

Landfill 'waste' explained

Since Concern Detroit's annual conference last spring, "Alternatives to Landfills," we have been contacted repeatedly for more information. The Consumer Mailbag has decided to run a series answering your questions regarding solid waste and its disposal. In the following five weeks, we will discuss recycling, incineration, composting, waste (source) reduction, landfilling and lifestyles. We hope you find this information valuable.

Q. What is solid waste?

A. Solid waste is anything that gets put in a garbage can, such as potato peels, paper, rags, cans, bottles, and grass clippings. It also includes items too big for a garbage can: discarded furniture, worn out appliances and tires. Solid waste includes all residential, commercial and industrial wastes. Solid Waste does not include hazardous wastes, or waste such as fly ash, foundry sand, or agricultural or demolition wastes.

The composition of solid waste varies from city to city, but typical accumulation includes: 45 percent paper, 8 percent plastic, 6 percent glass, 16 percent lawn and garden, 9 percent food wastes, 6 percent clothes, rags, rubber and 2 percent other.

Mortuary degree set

The Wayne State University Board of Governors has approved the establishment of a bachelor of science program in mortuary science in the College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions.

The department of mortuary science, under the direction of Gordon W. Rose, had previously offered a three-year certificate program.

The four-year degree program is designed to strengthen the student's background in the biological, physical and behavioral sciences. Wayne State's program in mortuary science is the only one in Michigan.

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consumer mailbag by Terry Gibb

In Michigan, 25,000 tons of solid waste are generated every day or enough to fill the Silverdome in 1 1/2 days. Currently 80-85 percent of this waste is disposed of in landfills. The average Michigan household pays \$78 a year to have its 2 1/2 tons of trash hauled away. Most are not aware of this charge because it's hidden among their taxes. In recent survey, 48 percent of those surveyed had no idea where their trash went after it left the curb.

Packaging and containers make up 33 percent of the total waste generated. Presently, 50 percent of the nation's paper, 75 percent of its glass, 40 percent of its aluminum, and 30 percent of the total plastics are used solely to pack and decorate consumer goods. Over-packaged goods are expensive. For each \$11 spent, \$1 is spent on packaging, or \$400 a year for a family of four. That's one-third of your trash collection spent just to throw away.

Next week: Landfills and their disadvantages. The Consumer Mailbag answers your questions. Address mail to The Consumer Mailbag, Concern Detroit, 1025 Shelby, Detroit, 48226.

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The students are sponsored by the non-profit American Scandinavian Student Exchange (ASSE International Student Exchange Program). ASSE is affiliated with the Swedish and Finnish Departments of Education and is officially designated by the U.S. Information Agency as an Exchange Visitor Program.

The 16- and 17-year-olds are fluent in English and carefully screened in Europe by their school and ASSE. Students have their own spending money and complete medical and liability insurance.

ASSE is also seeking qualified American high school students 16, 17 and 18 who would like to spend a year or six weeks in Europe. For information, contact Carol and Jack Mefford, 26810 Almont, 58810 Almont, Sterling Heights, MI 48077, or call 939-5455.

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