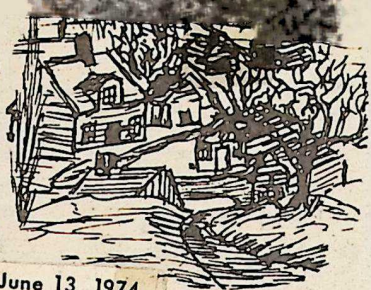


Village
View
by Andrea
Leonard



VILLAGE ADVERTISER June 13, 1974

Leafing through the February issue of Environment News, I ran across a Letter to the Editor from Arthur E. Clark, Ecology Chairman, Massachusetts Jaycees.

According to him the Jaycees promoted an Anti-Litter Week across the state from April 20 to April 27.

These dates have come and gone; although the letter promised widespread publicity, I missed it somehow.

What's bothering me now is that the campaign aimed only at one week in the spring.

What's the matter with a year-round project?

The slogan -- "JOIN THE POLLUTION SOLUTION" -- is catchy. It's positive. It encourages everyone to feel involved and responsible. But only for one week?

The letter recognizes the entire litter problem can't be solved in one week -- (but it could!); the Jaycees hoped to make the citizenry aware of the importance of making and keeping the environment litter-free, and activate people, each to do his share.

Mr. Clark said the Jaycees would distribute auto litter bags donated by the U.S. Brewers Association; local Jaycees would select areas of the town and conduct roadside cleanups; through publicity, Jaycees would encourage residents to keep roadsides in front of their own homes litter-free; and chapters of sufficient manpower would expand the program into beautification projects.

NOBLE!

What happened here on Cape Cod?

If auto litter bags were distributed, I'd like to know where. If there was a roadside cleanup in our town, I didn't hear about it. If there was publicity encouraging homeowners to pick up around their own property, I missed it.

If there's been any recent program to beautify roadsides, it's gone unnoticed and unheralded.

If these things are happening in the Town of Barnstable, and people don't know about it, publicity isn't reaching us.

How can people who haven't yet been made aware of the litter problem be involved and encouraged to take responsibility if those already concerned, like you and me, don't know about projects like this?

Litter is such an unnecessary ugly mess. Cape Cod roadsides are a disgrace.

Main Street in Hyannis, the Malls, West Main Street, Route 28 from one end of town to the other, and all roads leading to the Town Dump: these are just a few places where litter is a major problem.

About once a month, all winter, a small basket of trash can be collected in almost any square block in town.

Once a week, from Memorial to Columbus Days, a wheelbarrow of junk can be collected from the same square block.

Maybe it's your street, maybe mine; it makes no difference. If I can collect

on my block, I'm sure you can, on yours. - c
and do.

The variety of stuff collected often amazes me. There are always beer and soft drink cans, despite the laudable efforts of the U.S. Brewers Association to donate auto litter bags.

And there are always cigarette packages and filters, as well as those horrid plastic cigar mouthpieces, a particularly despised bit of trash.

There are bottles of all kinds: soft drink and hard, medicine and food, broken and intact. Broken glass is not only dangerous but glass will never decompose, rot or rust away.

Matchbooks, candy wrappers, newspapers, plastic bags, cookie boxes, celophane scraps, milk containers, drinking straws, bleach bottles, plastic flower pots and plant flats, and, in some cases, large plastic bags containing some traveler's weekend garbage -- all are cast on the roadsides.

All contribute to the mess. All must either be picked up or left to spoil the natural beauty of grass, shrubs and trees, the lawns, hedges and fences of homeowners, the meadows and open fields.

Some litter is unusual. I've collected, and sent to the dump along with ordinary trash gathered, a muddied blanket, two pair of blue jeans, a pair of sneakers in good condition, a six-pack of beer with two unopened cans, and a half-full bottle of Early Times Bourbon.

I've picked up plastic toys, school papers, a lady's green felt hat, a single nylon stocking, a man's ripped tee-shirt (size 38), a broken bureau drawer complete with brass handles, a bicycle pump and a boat horn.

Bags of garbage are sometimes dumped in the middle of the road; others are hung on wire fences, tossed into the woods, draped over tree limbs -- as well as piled next to trash cans at rest-areas along the Mid-Cape -- miniature mountains waiting for Monday-morning collection by road crews.

Another source of litter-on-the-road is building material. Insulation spilled or blown from construction sites and workmen's trucks is not attractive or useful strewn on streets and sidewalks.

Baling wire, plastic sheeting, window labels chunks of scrap lumber that would make grand kindling, all somehow escape; no one takes time to chase these things, pick them up, and dispose of them properly.

Cape Codders who get as far from home as Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to name just one place, will enjoy views of open countryside; it won't be long before they realize their pleasure is enhanced because there's no roadside litter or trash to be overlooked.

I'm not certain how the Pennsylvania Dutch lick the problem, but they're doing something right.

Thousands of tourists visit this beautiful farming country. The area enjoys a long and profitable season; the Amish and Mennonites living there capitalize on their neat and simple way of life, tidy farms, delicious food.

Other resort areas, too, succeed in staying litter-free. Not so on this peninsula of ours, the place we live, the land we love, the choice we've made to call home.

Where's our pride in it? What does each of us do to keep it looking decent? If we don't do it, who will? At the rate we're going, our streets and roads will soon resemble extensions of the Town Disposal Area.

I've no one to pick with the Jaycees. I'm sure they did what they could. Not it's up to us, as individuals, to clean up after ourselves; and, yes, after the slobs who toss stuff out of their car windows.

Did you ever notice -- litter seems to collect quickest and thickest where other litter is laying around? The non-littered places stay neat and tidy most of the time.

People wait, it seems, to throw their trash at some place someone else has already littered. Sort of like dogs, sniffing trees.....