

EDITORIAL

Life's pleasures found in human relationships

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At the beginning of a new year we have a tendency to look back on that just finished with a certain fondness and a certain relief. Good things happened to be remembered; and we survived another year, didn't we?

In a different way, we look forward to the new year wondering what it holds in store. We are hopeful, for it is the nature of man to be optimistic. We are wishful, for it is the nature of man never to be fully satisfied. And we have faith in the future because we have faith on our God, in ourselves, and in our strengths (in spite of our recognized and acknowledged weaknesses).

In this same vein, the advent of 1984 seems an appropriate time for a different looking back . . . and perhaps, for taking a view of the future different from the usual.

So look back. Look back past the recent recession to the dismal days of the Great Depression when, although about the same number of people were counted unemployed, the situation was very different. In the decade of the '30s, the more than 200 million people searching fruitlessly for work represented over one-quarter of the nation's POPULATION. During the worst of the recent recession from which the nation is recovering, almost 90% of the American WORK FORCE continued as usual in their jobs. Unemployment figures as high as 10% to 12% were reflected for only a relatively short period of time.

As we look back on the closing days of the Great Depression, days that were almost immediately followed by four years of World War, we recall the marvelous promises made for the future. Some of the promised innovations were on display at the World's Fair of 1939 in Flushing, New York. In the future, we were assured, we would change entirely the ways we dress and how we furnish our homes. Our clothes would be made of paper, be worn once or twice at most, and be so inexpensive, we would then throw them away and buy new. Clothes would be like facial tissue.

And plastics! Ah, this was the wonderstuff of tomorrow. No lady's hosiery would ever run again. No one's shoes would

ever wear out. We would hang plastic draperies at every window and upholster every stick of furniture with the miracle fabric, for it would never absorb soil, would be practically indestructible, and ridiculously inexpensive.

Transportation? In every garage instead of cars, we'd have hovercraft to take us airily wherever we wanted to go. No longer would we cope with traffic lights, routes leading around obstacles to our destinations, or speed limits. We would fly, as does the crow, from point to point, fly as easily over water as over land. And in cities, moving sidewalks would move people speedily from place to place practically eliminating any necessity for walking. Shoppers would sit comfortably before conveyor belts, choosing desired items as they passed in a never-ending parade. Scientists worried about people's muscles atrophying.

Communication? Television, of course; and the forecast that when we telephoned, we could see as well as hear each other. And mail was expected to be delivered within a matter of hours after being posted; such efficiencies had already been achieved in parts of Europe.

Looking back, we are a bit rueful for we found we didn't want plastic draperies, paper clothing, or plastic shoes. We much preferred natural fabrics. Plastics have, of course, found their places and uses.

And so it is with our hopes for and the promises of the coming year. We shall see some of our wishes come true and be glad; we shall see others realized and be less pleased than we had expected; some promises won't be kept at all, even though we can't see, right now, why not.

Whatever comes with tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, life will always be a struggle for most of this world's humans, will always be viewed by most of us as worth that struggle, and its satisfactions will be found where we are least apt to look for them . . . in the small joys and little pleasures of relationships between people . . . not in progress or change or acquisition.