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'Tis the season to be -- crowded.

Americans in general and Cape Codders in particular are unaccustomed to crowds. As a result, we all behave rather badly during the busy season.

Those of us who enjoy the Cape in all seasons feel resentful when it takes almost twice as long in summer months to get to and from work, do an errand, find a parking place, get through the lines at the check-out counter.

Those visiting us from places even more crowded feel they can take their time, spread out a bit, have a casual attitude toward parking regulations, ignore normal safety precautions...after all, they're on vacation and they're out-in-the-country...freed by the spaciousness of the Cape.

The result is frustration for Cape Codders, and a certain amount of rudeness accorded the visitor whose normally courteous behavior is temporarily discarded because it's relaxation time.

A little mutual consideration could enhance everyone's pleasure in the good-weather season, and everyone would have better feelings about himself and his fellowman.

Would it be asking too much of housewives, who have all day, every day, to pick up their groceries during hours when working people are unable to get to the market?

This consideration would permit those who, perforce, must buy their food after work or on weekends to do so without battling the bridge-club, the garden-club, the afternoon-tea-party members.

Would it be asking too much of those who go to the post office for their mail to wait until they have moved their cars from in front of the Post Office before they start reading their letters or newspapers?

This would permit others who want to get mail or post a letter to find an available parking place.

Would it be asking too much of those who play golf to use the parking area at the links, rather than unloading their clubs while parked under the "No Parking" signs along the sides of the road?

This would permit normal -- and safe -- flow of traffic on the road. That's the reason the "No Parking" signs are there. When cars are parked on the roadside in front of the golf club, an operator of an automobile can't see oncoming traffic, pedestrians, bicycles, or children in the road.

Would it be asking too much of those sightseers-by-car, traveling at 15 or 20 miles an hour, to glance into the rear-view mirror now and then, and if they notice they're at the head of a string of cars, to pull over and let the line pass before continuing their

'leisurely drive of appreciation?

This would permit people going and coming from work to get on about their businesses on a reasonable time schedule. If they get stuck behind a slow-moving car on one of our curving hilly roads -- that make our villages so attractive -- they lose precious minutes. These minutes can make dinner late for the whole family, make people late for evening appointments, make us feel rushed and unhappy. It's the dominoe-effect and starts a whole chain of events.

Would it be asking too much of those going to the library for an hour or two of browsing, or those window-shopping along Main Street, to leave their cars in the off-street parking lots instead of filling the curbside parking spaces for long periods of time?

This would permit those with a quick errand at the bank, the drug store, the fish market, the insurance agency, to park for three or four minutes and leave promptly, making space for the next person to do his small errand -- pick up a newspaper or get a loaf of bread or a quart of milk.

There are, of course, ways to enforce more considerate use of parking spaces. We can install parking meters and hire a police officer to patrol them and pass out parking tickets to those who overstay the limit.

Because we hope to maintain the illusion of being a non-urban area, we prefer no parking meters in our villages. They're anything but attractive, expensive to buy, install, maintain, patrol and service. For eight or nine months of the year, we don't need them.

We can avoid parking meters if everyone will show a little consideration and thoughtfulness for others.

People who spend a couple of weeks or a month here in season forget the population of the Cape grows from a little more than 100,000 to nearly half a million each summer.

This strains our roads and traffic system, not to mention our tempers. The behavior patterns of year-rounders are broken without the corresponding relaxation of holiday-freedom our visitors enjoy.

We must still get to our offices and shops on time; we must still pick up our mail, get to the bank, stop for our papers, get our auto registration papers filled out, do our marketing -- just as though the villages weren't

overcrowded with summer people and tourists.

When we visit cities no special courtesies are accorded us because we're out-of-towners. When in Rome, we must do as the Romans do. Is it too much to ask of the Romans to show us corresponding courtesy when they come to our part of the world?

If our summer visitors will ponder for a moment upon how their numbers change our villages, overtax our streets and roads, it seems reasonable to suppose they'd willingly change their thoughtlessness to more consideration.

If just some respond, if just some give up their places in front of the post office as soon as possible, if just some will adjust shopping hours, if just some spending an hour or so in the village will use the off-street parking provided, traffic and parking problems will ease for all.

Please, don't leave it all up to the other guy. Do your part.

If we must live in an over-populated world-- and it's evident we must -- we'd best treat with courtesy the others with whom we must share it.

Villagers look forward to summer and the summer people, just as the summer people look forward to coming to the Cape. It's fine to have them back with us again.

Nevertheless, long before Labor Day, nerves are frazzled, and we're relieved when the crowds finally thin out, nice as many people assuredly are. This feeling will greatly diminish with some thoughtfulness and appreciation of the position of the "other guy".

Now, Is there something we can do for YOU -- to add to your vacation pleasure? Are there ways we, too, are thoughtless and inconsiderate? We'll cooperate if we can!