

village view

by Andrea Leonard

As the winter holiday season approaches, we think of family gatherings, people we'll celebrate with, what to feed them, how to please them. It's traditional.

The young family prepares for the holidays by repeating and continuing family customs. Older people entertain younger ones; younger people share joy with older ones. It's a time of drawing together with those you love and who love you.

If some of your children are old enough to be away at school or college, you and they will be looking forward to their homecoming and celebrating family traditions.

If it's customary to serve turkey at Thanksgiving, roast beef at Christmas, and ham for Easter, those long-practiced patterns reinforced this year, once again. Changing them would detract from the holiday feeling.

If your children are living independent lives, married or working away from home, you may be visiting them for the holidays. They'll repeat the patterns for you, as you set them during their growing years.

Your grandchildren will, in turn, learn the traditions the family has passed on from year to year. You may find little changes...an extra course, a different dessert, a fruit shrub for an appetizer instead of cranberry juice cocktail.

Changes in family customs are bound to occur in small ways; perhaps shortages or plentitudes, perhaps preferences perhaps geographical limitations will make for changes. Tradition survives these and plays the part of continuity, imparting feelings of security. A family knows what to expect from its members and who and what it can count on.

There are traditions in nearly everything society does. Families are expected to meet certain standards in socializing children; schools are expected to educate children in basics in addition to any extra modern courses they may offer; social groups are expected to provide the usual and accepted pleasures; churches are expected to give training and support in traditional religions.

Just as families, schools, social groups devoted to young people function as socializing aids, reinforcing lessons children learn at home, in school and in religious training.

Whether the programs are Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Big Brothers-Big Sisters, or are sponsored by the "Y" or the Salvation Army, benefits accrue to the young people able to participate as well as to society as a whole.

Each of these programs offers youngsters criteria against which to measure themselves. Kids are encouraged to be clean and neat, to be honest and respectful, to be patriotic and moral, to be thoughtful and kind. The adults who work with them set examples in good behavior for the children to follow.

Youngsters learn appreciation of their natural environment, how to win and lose at games, how to work together as a team and help one another. The adults who work with them demonstrate these values.

They learn to build a fire safely and cook a meal outdoors, to follow a trail, arts and crafts, overnight camping, to sail a boat, swim, tie knots, and to identify fish and birds, trees and bushes, ivies and vines, insects and shellfish.

And they learn to get along with other people in an environment less structured than the classroom, less intimate than home. The adults who work with them show them through their own actions how to handle themselves in these situations.

What makes it possible for these organizations to exist, for children to participate? What would make it possible for more children to benefit from scouting, Big Brothers-Big Sisters, the "Y" or other similar programs? More adult volunteers, more adult participation.

It's not entirely a non-paying job, even though it is volunteer work. Although its rewards can't be measured in pocket change or folding money, the rewards are far more lasting than cash.

The man who becomes a Big Brother of a fatherless boy gains as well as gives. He gains the admiration of the boy who makes him a role-model. He gains the love of another person--nothing to be taken lightly. He gains insight into what people the age of his Little Brother are thinking and feeling.

The woman who takes responsibility for helping with a Girl Scout troop, whether or not she has a daughter of her own in the group, learns to handle a gaggle of giggling girls, how to bring smiles, dry tears, bandage scraped knees, and inspire self-confidence in her scouts. She remembers what it's like to be a little girl.

The man who gives time to a Boy Scout Cub Pack, the woman who's a Den Mother, the Scout Leader, the Camp Fire Girl Leader...all these adults give their time in return for the satisfactions of sharing and caring. The young people, in a few short years, will be taking their places as adults in our communities.

Rewards and satisfactions aren't automatic; no. Certain investments and commitments must be made. Time. Caring. Love. Attention. Concern. All these must be given. An example must be set; an example youth can admire and use as a pattern.

Is it worth it? Hundreds of adult men and women on Cape Cod is still in its infancy, there are ninety adult men and women with Little Brothers and Little Sisters who are receiving much-needed special attention. And there are a hundred-

and-twenty Little Brothers and Sisters waiting and hoping some concerned adult will offer them the attention, the time, the caring they so sadly lack.

Every scout troop--boys or girls--needs more adult volunteers. Camp Fire Girls needs them too. No one on Cape Cod can honestly say he or she has no contribution to make, or that making friends is difficult, or that volunteering to serve a youth group meets with unenthusiastic response.

You, and you alone, can take the initiative to participate actively and enable the programs to expand to that all young people can take part and so that our world will become healthier, socially. You, and you alone, can offer your dedicated effort to help steer youngsters away from delinquency and towards responsible citizenship.

Surely it's not enough to deplore the rising crime rate, not enough to be shocked and dismayed at vandalism, not enough to be appalled and bewildered when juveniles destroy property, wreak havoc out of boredom, turn to drugs--to alcohol, frighten the elderly, threaten the weak, and cause us all to feel it may be unsafe to walk on the street at night.

Surely responsible adults, if they will but give, can do much to change the statistics and reduce the number of children who find their way into trouble.

If we want a better world, it behooves us to devote some time and effort to the generation coming along.

Won't YOU volunteer? It is, after all, traditional.

Environmental Impact

by Gilbert Newton

"The United States is in full environmental retreat." So said Dr. Robert J. Livingston, a water pollution biologist at Florida State University, to me last week as we returned from a lecture. Dr. Livingston was commenting on a trend which has become apparent to many people who are concerned about environmental abuse and pollution. There are several signs which indicate that many of the gains in environmental protection achieved at the beginning of this decade are about to be completely reversed. The three major areas facing trouble are energy, air pollution, and water pollution.

The energy crisis is real, serious, and complicated. Because energy policy affects all of us, everyone has something at stake. Consequently, everyone has their own interests to protect, and that's the problem. When President Carter said that we must all make sacrifices, he wasn't just speculating. Since the introduction of his energy package last April, a proposal I thought was basically sound and practical, every type of industrial lobbyist has descended on Washington predicting doomsday. Thus, the Senate has rejected most of the significant portions of the President's program. The oil companies in particular want off-shore oil leases, shale development, and strip mining. They want an end to the environmental regulations which may very well be the only barrier between a relatively safe environment and complete disaster.

The Clean Air Act is also being singled out for destruction. Every few years the automobile companies receive still another delay in cleaning up automotive emissions. They also claim that it's impossible to manufacture cars that get at least 30 miles to the gallon, even though Japan and Sweden have been putting out models that do a lot better for several years. And now we have a referendum before the people of Pittsburgh giving them the choice of clean air or jobs in the steel industry. Once again, the issue has been over-simplified. The loss in jobs in the steel industry is due more to cheaper foreign imported steel than it is to federal clean air standards.

The Clean Water Act of 1972 is the other victim of the big corporate guns. Over 300 companies, which have been constantly violating federal water pollution standards by pouring cancer-causing chemicals into our water supplies, are lobbying Congress to end the 1985 zero discharge deadline. Americans apparently can get along without water if we are to follow this industrial reasoning. It has become quite clear that the environmental battles of the 1970's will be quite puny compared to those of the 1980's. Let's hope that Dr. Livingston's comment will be proven false.

