

Village  
View  
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As 1974 scuttles away into the last paragraph of the newest history book, take a look at where we are compared to where we were a year ago at this time.

On a personal level, perhaps you're thinking that things look a lot bleaker than they did then. You're a year older (and unless you're very young, that's nothing to crow about), and probably, if you're like most of us, you're worried about the economy, inflation and unemployment.

We all are. And probably the energy shortage is affecting you along with the rest of the world. If you're not actually having to do without, you're having to pay more for what you use.

On a local level, we have made some good progress in the last year. Although the proposed new Charter for the Town of Barnstable failed to pass, our Selectmen have adopted some of its recommendations to give us better government now and a better world in the future.

Five things, in particular, stand out. The first is the public meetings between the Selectmen and the voters. If nothing else changed, that one step is the most important we've seen in local government in decades.

The second is the Reclamation center at the Town Disposal Area. Reclaiming glass bottles and jars and the metal in tin cans not only provides income, it also saves space in the dump. As soon as another market is found for old newspapers, we'll be collecting them again, too.

The third is the new school which was finally approved after almost seven year's delay; the fourth is the geological study of our fresh water supply; the fifth is the passage of the Regional Historic District.

We've made some progress. Incidentally, some mail boxes were spruced up, as well.

The broader scenes of state, national and international scope, I'll leave to those who may be better-qualified than I to analyze.

On the minus side are the things we all worry about: inflation, recession and increasing unemployment. The only good thing I can see coming out of these is that if recession continues, inflation will not.

It may take a while for recession to drive prices down, but if we can just hang in there, it'll happen.

With the slow-down-to-a-crawl of construction on the Cape, unemployment is a severe problem this winter. While you're not urged to spend money you haven't got, if you've been saving up your pennies to do some renovating, this might be a good winter to find workmen with time to do the job right.

If you choose to keep your savings in the bank, you'll be providing capital the bank can loan to someone else for a mortgage or some home improvements.

Either way, you'll be helping to decrease the unemployment problem and keep money in circulation. Banks pay interest on deposits because they put to work the dollars you leave in their care. As those dollars work in the community, everyone benefits.

Depressions develop when the dollars stop circulating; that's something we all want to avoid if we can.

The energy crisis has pointed up the close relationship between conservation and our supplies of natural resources. It now seems clear that when we use more than we've got, we find ourselves in a bind.

While this is now evident to everyone as far as oil is concerned,

please don't close your eyes to the fact that the same is true of everything else. Whether it's fresh water or iron or copper or whatever.

If we waste it, and our supply runs low, it will soon become scarce and the price will increase.

We can find a scapegoat in the Arabs who are well-supplied with what we want more of, at this time, and blame them for "holding us up" and call them highway robbers. All they are doing is practicing capitalism -- with a vengeance, perhaps -- but they are pricing their product on the basis of supply and demand.

Our choice is simple: pay the price or go without. In time, if we're as smart as I think we are, we'll develop the alternate energy source our technology already makes possible.

The sooner we begin work on that, the sooner we'll be out of the woods. Historically we are victimized again and again by permitting ourselves to become dependent upon foreign sources of indispensables.

You'd think, in time, we'd learn. You'd think we'd be more watchful and as we see dependencies beginning, start then to develop alternatives.

You'd think the oil companies, at this time, would concentrate research and development of the alternative energy sources we must find, instead of blindly continuing to wring every last drop of oil from our dwindling and already meager supply.

Looking to the future, we know changes must come. While change-for-the-sake-of-change isn't progress, changes for the better can optimistically be anticipated. We're still unsure of the future -- but haven't we always been?

There are things we can do to influence the future. We can accept our individual responsibility for conservation of energy, of materials, and clean air and fresh water. Once exhausted, they'll be gone forever. We alone can protect them but only if we do our parts as individuals.

It took us all, as individuals, to endanger them. It'll take us all, as individuals, to reverse the trend.

In these final moments of 1974 and those of the brand new 1975, I'd like to make the following wishes together with each of you.

Hope for the future, in spite of the gloomy clouds around us.

Action to develop better ways of meeting our needs.

Preservation of our natural resources.

Peace in the world.

Your participation in working toward a better future.

New ways to supply the demands and meet the needs of humanity.

Everyone doing his part.

Willingness to give up luxuries so all may have necessities.

Yankee thrift practiced in all things.

Early recognition of the importance of cooperation with one another.

Abundant supplies available to everyone.

Robust health in every facet of our lives and collective society.