

VILLAGE VIEW

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How much do you see as you move through the hours of your day? Our eyes, those miraculous instruments of vision, can be compared to a camera. They register everything in their path, just as the lens of a camera does.

The entire panoply of a scene can be recorded by a camera if its shutter opens to allow the proper amount of light to fall on unexposed film. Our brains work the same way but without benefit of shutter or film. Our brains record all we see if we allow images to make their impressions. The choice of what our brains record is an individual one.

Do we walk a country road on a foggy morning and see the light intensify as mists thin? Are we aware of shadows growing more defined as the sun burns through? Do we notice colors deepen as rays penetrate haze? Or do we walk uncaringly, engrossed in our thoughts? Do we see with our eyes, but not with our brains?

Walk a country mile with open eyes, here on Cape Cod, and what will you see? Changing light, dappling shadows cast by green leaves, the pearly bark of tree trunks, velvety moss above knobby roots, ant hills in your path, last year's pine needles and oak leaves carpeting the earth, a flash of feathered wing when birds fly to safety, grasses tangled at ankle height, and over head skies becoming more blue as the early morning clouds disperse? Is that what you see?

You might also see, and your brain may also record if you so permit, less inspiring sights. You may see litter and trash tossed carelessly into surrounding woodlands. You may see bottles and cans, singly or in heaps, discarded by someone who passed this way before you came. You can choose not to notice the unsightly mess. You can choose to look the other way until your steps take you beyond the ugliness. The choice is yours, but today, just this once, I implore that you notice.

Notice as you walk. Notice as you drive to do your errands. Notice roadsides as you go about your daily activities. And, imagine how much lovelier the world would look without the litter.

You will soon have an opportunity to bear witness either for or against the continuance of trashed scenery. Bending to citizen pressure, our state legislators voted last fall to override Governor King's veto and pass the Bottle Bill which is to take effect in January 1983. But the battle is not yet won! Special interests, that Bottle Bill proponents refer to as the Litter Lobby, now wage war against those of us who see, notice, and are disgusted by waste strewn over lawns, beaches, parks and along our roads and streets.

The special interests have put on our November, 1982, ballot a proposal to repeal the Bottle Bill even before it goes into effect. It is now the responsibility of voters to defeat repeal of the anti-litter measure. Millions of dollars are now being spent by the Litter Lobby to overturn the action of the legislature before the bill has a chance to prove its worth.

Only last summer (while legislators debated) the Litter Lobby hired young people to collect trash and clean up the messes. Did they concentrate efforts where litter lay thickest? Oh, No! They directed their corps of youthful workers to operate where they would be most visible to the public. Strictly a P.R. performance. Boys and girls wearing caps and vests advocating defeat of the Bottle Bill scurried around busy intersections where people (not trash) were thickest.

While reducing litter everywhere is desirable, eliminating litter entirely is the driving force behind the Bottle Bill. Beverage containers make up 60% of all litter, by volume. These are the most dangerous kinds of litter, too. Gum wrappers and empty cigarette packages cause no cut feet or flat tires; they eventually disintegrate. Bottles and cans, however, lay where they land until someone picks them up.

How will the bottle bill achieve its goal? By creating an economic incentive for returning beverage containers. Other states have experienced a 66% to 90% reduction in bottle and can litter, as well as a 33% to 50% reduction in total litter. Litter breeds litter. People dump trash where trash has already been thrown.

Will the Bottle Bill reduce beverage costs? More than half the cost of producing beer and soft drinks in throwaway containers goes for the container itself. Total beverage production costs will drop if containers are recycled. Governor King's own Task Force predicted a permanent decrease in beverage prices as a result of passage of the Bottle Bill.

Because the bill won't take effect until after November's election, bottle and can manufacturers hope for repeal before we can see the improvement in litter control that results. The Litter Lobby is spending millions of dollars to hoodwink voters again (as it did in 1976).

Isn't it time to give the Bottle Bill a chance to prove its value? We see, on all sides and in all seasons, evidence that no Bottle Bill results in littered, trashed and despoiled

Will the Bottle Bill affect energy savings? Only about 5% of bottles and cans are recycled now. That's all those huge heaps of green, brown and clear glass in the bins at the disposal area represent. All the rest, 95%, end up either in our land fill or scattered heedlessly for us to step on, drive over, or feel sick at the sight of.

With the Bottle Bill in effect, based on several years of experience in other states which have enacted similar bills, that 5% figure will leap to between 80% and 90%. What's more, the beverage industry will use 30% to 50% less energy

to produce containers. Recycling containers is economically feasible, as aluminum companies' collection drives attest.

Will the Bottle Bill effect our wallets? Millions of dollars now being spent by Massachusetts cities and towns to pick up and dispose of solid waste will be saved. Those dollars are your tax dollars. They come, one by one, penny by penny, from your pockets. YOUR money, being wasted. You work hard for your dollars; the tax man takes what he needs of them; if he needs fewer dollars, you keep more for yourself.

If Massachusetts voters repeal the Bottle Bill, littering and waste of energy and waste of tax dollars will continue unabated. If we defeat repeal, starting next January the bill goes into effect. So, too, do the savings.

Walk with me a Cape Cod country mile. Be careful where you step, be open-eyed and open-minded. See the bottles and cans, the trash and garbage, along every path. Let all that's visible register on the camera-film of your brain. Choosing what our minds record is an individual matter; reaching a decision about right and wrong is an individual matter. Voting is an individual matter.

Thousands of Massachusetts citizens, as individuals, have worked since 1973 to implement a Bottle Bill. They have finally convinced their elected representatives. They haven't yet convinced the Litter Lobby.

The show-down comes this fall at the polls. In the meantime, keep your eyes peeled. Let your brain register the enormity of the litter situation.