

"Think globally act locally" says science student

Future depends on recycling

EDITOR'S NOTE: Marion Kester is a Georgetown resident currently attending the University of Waterloo where she will graduate next year with a Bachelor of Environmental Studies degree with a matching Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. She will be submitting a monthly column over the summer months dealing with environmental issues, particularly recycling, in Halton Hills.

By MARION KESTER
Herald Special

I can still recall the times as a child when my mother hounded me to throw my garbage, which at the time amounted to items like Kleenex and gum wrappers, in the garbage can.

Trips to the local park and family camping vacations gave me the opportunity to follow my mother's wishes. At that time I obeyed her either because I was an obedient child or I was simply afraid of punishment. More often than not compliance was due to the latter.

Every now and again I would wonder what difference discarding one tiny piece of Kleenex would make. Surely in this vast expanse of land we call home, accidentally dropping a piece of garbage would seem insignificant.

I realized later in life that it wasn't about Kleenex or gum wrappers. It was the development of an attitude which would direct the path I would take toward a university degree in Environmental Science.

It was simple, I was responsible for the garbage which I produced.

From this realization stemmed another grave discovery, that not everyone shared this attitude. This lack of responsibility on the part of far too many individuals is partially to blame for the dismal state of our environment.

In the late 1980s when the environment is the voting public's number one concern, rallying cries to clean up our surroundings is no longer the quaint preserve of Greens, anarchists, feminists, and other activists for social change.

The practical limits of our misguided actions, which result in environmental degradation, dictate that people consume less and

conserve more.

Fortunately, through individual and group initiatives, people are rediscovering a sense of self-reliance, a celebration of community, and a sense of personal power based on creativity rather than exploitation.

What I am referring to here are three simple practices: reduction, reuse, and recycling. All these practices are aimed at diverting waste slated for a slow death at a landfill site.

As a householder and consumer, always keep in mind that there is a hierarchy of waste management where reduction and reuse take precedence over recycling. If some waste is not generated in the first place, there is no need to recycle it.

Individuals should make conscious purchasing decisions whenever possible.

One way of reducing the amount of garbage each of us produces is by refusing to buy over-packaged items, opting instead for bulk food at retail outlets. Packaging makes up to 30 per cent by weight and 50 per cent by volume of the waste stream. For each \$1,000 of sales in the average supermarket, 100 lbs. of corrugated cardboard and 65 lbs. of other packaging are thrown out.

Avoid buying items, such as eggs, in styrofoam containers when alternatives exist. You could also write to manufacturers to let them know you refuse to purchase a product because of the negative environmental impact of its packaging. In addition, tell them if you strongly approve of biodegradable packaging alternatives.

Avoid disposable products if alternatives are available and buy items in containers which can be returned to the point of purchase.

Remember: you can make a difference each time you purchase groceries by boycotting over-packaged and disposable items.

Reusing items is also of vital importance to effective waste reduction. A few suggestions include: rubber bands, jars, envelopes, and plastic or paper bags. Not all used materials are garbage, but because we think they are, we lose seven million tonnes of valuable resources each year.

The most extensive household effort at reducing the amount of solid waste is the familiar curb-side recycling program. To date, "we recycle" graces the sides of 1.25 million blue boxes in Ontario every week. If you don't already participate in this program, do so by rinsing out the following items and placing them in your blue box to be picked up on garbage day. These items are: glass bottles and jars, aluminum and steel food and beverage cans, plastic soft drink containers and this newspaper.

At the present time, 10 per cent of Halton's garbage is recycled and mandatory household recycling is a strong possibility commencing early next year.

Recycling is a way of saving valuable resources and energy while minimizing our dependence on landfills and incineration. As Canadians, we recycle less than two per cent of the household materials we use. If households would recycle 75 per cent of their paper, 20 million trees would be spared. Nunkirchen, Austria currently recycles 65 per cent of its household waste and many other communities in Europe and the United States are developing recycling programs that will achieve at least a 50 per cent recycling rate. There really exists no reason why we can't strive for the same results. Lobby local municipal councillors to push for increased government spending to include more recyclable materials for the blue box.

As the awareness of the importance of recycling flourishes in the minds of more and more citizens as this garbage day habit takes hold, there will be even more reasons for government to pay greater attention to the environmental agenda.

The three Rs must be an integral part of a community's waste management scheme, however the responsibility lies with each of its members to participate in such practices.

Acting on a local level, while keeping a global perspective in mind of such issues as diminishing natural resources, is a major step toward guaranteeing survival for future generations.

In essence, think globally and act locally.

More Bang-o-rama fun



Not all the activities at last weekend's Bang-O-Rama were of the hardworking variety. A lighthearted midway rider (top) found time to enjoy a spin (literally) in the warm air while a tug-of-war enthusiast grimaced during the heat of battle. (Herald photos)

MY GENERATION

"Fashions For The Young At Heart"

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Caledon Players cry "Bingo"

Caledon Townhall Players presents "Bingo," a comedy by Allan Stratton, presented by the Old Caledon Township Hall in Caledon Village (Hwy. 10 and 24). Performances will go from May 24, 26, 27, to June 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, and July 1. Tickets for the May 24 preview are \$3.50, but the regular price is \$6.50.

"Bingo" by Allan Stratton is a farce concerning the untold goings-on of tutorial sessions with an English professor, a pretty co-ed, an unattended wife and a jealous husband.

There is a special dinner theatre package for Saturday, May 27.

\$16.50 includes roast beef dinner and the production of "Bingo." Call 927-5261 for tickets or information.

If you are interested in reserving regular tickets, please call (519) 941-4653.

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ADMISSION PRICES: ADULTS - \$8.00 CHILDREN (12 & Under) & SENIORS - \$4.00

TICKETS ON SALE AT BOX OFFICE ON SHOWDAY.