

Lifestyles

Now the West must be examined



John Sommer
Ideas and the Arts

For something like two generations we have seen ourselves in relation to communism, the utopian ideology that spread its brutish grip over vast parts of the world and enslaved the very people it was meant to set free.

In comparison to the disasters of communist societies ours seemed to be totally successful in bringing comfort and plenty to the masses. As a result capitalism engaged in an orgy of self-congratulation and became, by being so uncritical towards its own motivations, itself a utopian ideology. The communist regimes sacrificed the lives of millions to whip a reluctant populace along the thorny path to future bliss. We in turn, hit on the stupendously stupid idea that we could consume ourselves to riches through neverending economic growth, made possible by the exploitation of the world's non-renewable resources to produce a gaudy parade of frivolous trash.

Now, that the nightmarish communist edifice has been shattered and found to be nothing but empty promises and cowardly collaboration, are we going to mend our ways? Or are we going to make merry?

Twenty-five years ago the revolution against the war in Vietnam produced a great amount of rebellious young people who took their elders to task for their seeming pre-occupation with wealth and easy living. It looked as if these young people, once they had grown up, would turn into far more responsible and conscientious adults than their parents had been, that they would lead modest lives and begin to reform a system that reduces everything to a market commodity.

Strangely enough the opposite has happened. Today's marketplace is the greediest, most irresponsible we ever had. By selling to the highest bidder assets that belong to all of us, even our leaders have the gleam of greed in

their eyes now, showing a deep-seated lust that would make them untrustworthy as leaders if we only had standards to judge them by at election time. Within a lifetime a fairly wholesome country like Canada has become a gambling den filled with people who fritter away their children's inheritance for the vulgar pleasures of today.

The fact is that we can not live by cake alone. We have to temper the worst instincts within us and remember that we are not the sole owners of this planet. We are here only for a very short time and we have no right, in those few years of our earthly existence, to ravage and destroy, to kill and maim, to uproot and burn, what has taken thousands of years to grow and accumulate.

What will happen, finally, when we have mindlessly used up and consumed what makes our world so unique, so compelling, so beautiful? What will happen when the delirious party is over and we have to face the stark reality of an impoverished planet? What will happen to the vast, luxurious mansions all over the country when the roaming refugees from the fast increasing economic wastelands of the world are on the march to still fertile pastures, waiting to be looted? Will we again erect walled towns to keep the rabble out or are we to re-open the extermination camps to gas whoever spoils the pretty picture with hunger and want? How is democracy to survive in this new dark age of terror, war and male dominance, and how will people, who will have to live through this man-made night, judge us and our unconcern for any deeper issues but shopping?

I hear you say that, surely, science will find a way out, new inventions will solve all those problems that now look so unsurmountable, there is no need to be so gloomy, the Lord will provide, let's enjoy life, let's have fun, the future will take care of itself! You might be proven right. Nothing in human history is encouraging us to think however that unconcern and thoughtlessness have ever been given an award by fate.

Phone calls, break-ins prompt residents to form Rural Watch

By BEN DUMMETT
the Herald

Fearing that someone has been trying to break into her house for the last few months an Acton woman is trying to set up a Rural Watch program in her neighborhood.

Margery Staley, who lives on the First Line in Acton, says she has received numerous phone calls from someone who hangs up as soon as she answers it.

"I know the person is checking to see if I'm home," says Ms. Staley.

On one occasion a person swore at her when she picked up the phone. "The person was probably mad that someone was home," she speculated.

Ms. Staley says the calls were most noticeable just before Christmas.

She also found that her neighbors were having trouble. Once the phone calls began Ms. Staley began approaching her neighbors and out of the 29 she contacted four had had a recent theft from their home.

Ms. Staley has decided action has to be taken. She invited nearby residents to listen to Halton Regional Police Crime Prevention Co-ordinator for Halton Hills and Milton, Sergeant Frank Phillips say that the Rural Watch program means residents play "a major role" in preventing someone from robbing their homes. The inaugural meeting was held at Robert Little School in Acton Jan. 24.

About 30 people heard that the police are there to prevent crime but homeowners also have eyes. "People have to become more aware of what's going on in their neighborhood; they just can't live in isolation of each other," explained Sgt. Phillips.

He suggested people be on the look-out for strangers driving through their neighborhood. They should also get to know the day-to-day patterns of their neighbors. This way they will be better able to identify suspicious people in the neighborhood, he said.

There are several ways a person wanting to break into a house can find out if anyone is at home. They can phone the house. And in the

rural area this is usually easy because the name of the residents are usually on their mail boxes, said Sgt. Phillips. And once they have the name the telephone number is just a phone book away.

Another way is for a prospective thief to knock on someone's door. If the owner is home the thief will

several that must happen to establish the program.

During this meeting the residents also learned when to use the 911 emergency number. And it is not to be used if the "person's cat is stuck in a tree."

People should only use the number in life threatening situa-



Acton resident Margery Staley is trying to do her part to reduce crime in her neighborhood. Ms. Staley invited North Halton crime prevention officer Sergeant Frank Phillips to speak to Ms. Staley and her neighbors about establishing a Rural Watch program, last Wednesday at Robert Little Public School in Acton. (Herald photo)

just pretend to having a mistaken address.

Sgt. Phillips says there hasn't been a noticeable increase in crime in the area of the First Line in Acton. But he acknowledged it's difficult for police to supervise the rural areas because of the long distances that have to be covered.

Ms. Staley agrees the crime level in the area of First Line is no greater today than at any other time during the 20 years she has lived in the area. But she recently retired and she now has the time to devote to organizing a program.

Sgt. Phillips stressed the greater the neighborhood participation the more successful the rural watch program.

He was pleased with the turnout for the program's inaugural meeting calling the number "excellent." But the goal is 100 per cent participation, he says.

Last week's meeting is one of

tions, said Sgt. Phillips. He will be discussing such topics as residential security, operation identification, the identification of suspects and how to set up and maintain a rural watch program at the next meeting tentatively scheduled for Feb. 19.

Residents will learn how to properly lock their homes' windows and doors. He will also stress the importance of lighting a house and making sure homeowners don't plant high shrubs near windows or doors. Thieves use the shrubs to hide behind, Sgt. Phillips said.

He will explain how people can deter thieves by having their driver's license numbers engraved on their belongings. No one will buy stolen goods that can be identified, the sergeant said.

To identify a suspect people will learn to look for physical characteristics such as height, weight and hair color.

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