

Seniors Long distance view offers hope

By FLORENCE WILKINSON

Are you badgered at this time of year by everyone who wants you to feel good by donating to some charity or other? Have you been submerged by material trying to interest you in ecology, recycling, save the forests or some other worthy cause - and then have it brought to your attention that there are already people on our own streets who need help to survive some job change or even maybe perpetual poverty?

Well, if we were not so affluent a community, we seniors could escape under the heading of "fixed income." It is true that many seniors do not have to survive on a fixed income which is below the present poverty line as set by the government, but it is also true, according to research, that these same seniors are the ones who donate most freely to those in need - not because they want to "feel good" (as some of the ads say) but because they have a sense of values which makes people important.

Many of the older seniors will well remember the recycling days of their youth when a man would come around with a horse and cart crying "any rags? any bottles? any bones?" Just think what might have happened, if, after the Second World War, the

Seniors for the Future

same type of recycling was kept up!

If that had happened I would not now find in my mailbox a handful of material urging me to know about the condition of the poor earth!

There would not be such statistics to read as "Last year Americans (not including Canadians I suspect) threw out enough aluminum to rebuild the country's entire air fleet four times: enough wood and paper to heat five million homes for the next 200 years: enough office paper to erect a 12-foot-high wall from New York to Los Angeles: enough motor oil to equal 41 Exxon Valdez spills: enough garbage to fill a convoy of trucks, bumper to bumper (are they thinking of the 401?) halfway to the moon."

Remember the good old day when "forty-nine ninety-five" means forty nine dollars and ninety-five cents, not four thousand, nine hundred and ninety-five dollars? What a generation gap appears when different members of an extended family think of money values. I remember the day that I paid four thousand dollars for a new car and thought it was terrible -

that was as much as my parents had paid for the farm (not including the interest of course).

If we seniors remember some of these changes, and try to help keep in perspective real value instead of inflated value; if we recall some of the oldtimers love for the land and their good stewardship of it; if we ourselves try to care as much about waste packaging, paper, metal, gas, oil, etc., as we were required to do during the Second World War, we might lead the procession in conservation and recycling - we KNOW that humans are able to survive - even survive with happiness in life on less waste and less attention to personalized packaging that is required by today's throw-away society.

However, changing economic values: challenging power hungry corporations: badgering governments to enforce regulations about packaging: being on top of world ecological needs are born out of a different set of values, and can only be sustained if and when people begin to care more for people and for the universe in which people must co-exist with the rest of the universe. The power hungry, self-centred world which has developed to bring us our throw-away society claims authority from Christian Scriptures which give responsibility for "dominion over" the rest of creation.

Understanding which realizes that this is a selfish secularized version, not a scriptural version has to be rediscovered if any performance is to result from our present quest. Other religions will have their influence on such understanding.

Evaluating Canadian Native relationship to the earth has given me a greater appreciation for my own Christian roots, as taught by my parents.

Whatever your religious or philosophical roots are, I am sure that you, the seniors of today, will be able to bring hope into the quest for saving our universe which is being much publicized and strived for in today's Canada and today's world. Having lived through days of old-time recycling, of depression, and of war, gives us a long-distance view which makes hope possible.

Seniors medication

Most people have heard their physicians talk about taking drugs with certain foods. Some drugs should be taken on an empty stomach, while others should be taken with food to increase absorption. Certain drugs should not be consumed with dairy products, while others should not be taken with fruit juices - or anything with an acid PH. And some antidepressants should never be combined with foods containing tyramine (such as avocados, bananas, cheese, chocolate, liver, yogurt), an interaction that could prove dangerous.

Seniors account for approximately one-quarter of all prescription drugs dispensed in Canada. Since many elderly people are taking multiple medications and often experience adverse drug reactions (ADRs), they need to be especially concerned about medicating themselves in a manner that is safe and effective.

There is evidence that aging is accompanied by changes in the way the human body absorbs, distributes, metabolizes, and eliminates drugs. Some studies have shown that drug concentrations in the blood of elderly per-

sons are actually higher than those found in young people, probably because the elderly metabolize and eliminate drugs more slowly than the young.

On the other hand, seniors may not absorb drugs as efficiently as young people. "As people age, their gastrointestinal systems become less efficient," explains Dr. Avedis K. On the other hand, seniors may not absorb drugs as efficiently as young people. "As people age, their gastrointestinal systems become less efficient," explains Dr. Avedis Khachadurian, head of the department of endocrinology at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey. "The stomach has many capabilities that diminish with time. With less acid secretion there is slower gastric emptying, and the result may be both nutrient and drug malabsorption."

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