

Editorial

Environmental committment

More and more, Canadians are becoming environmentally conscious and for two main reasons.

Simply put, the main reason is out of necessity. Mankind is slowly killing this planet and something had to be done to slow the deadly process. Procedures are now being implemented to clean up the mess we have collectively made.

The second reason we are becoming more environmentally conscious might best fall under the heading "aesthetic concern." What kind of legacy would be left to future generations? Our children, their children and their children's children.

Locally, we have a number of groups and individuals who are attempting to raise the banner of the environment on high. It is doubtful, however, these groups and individuals could come close to the commitment to the environment a British Columbia couple and their children have made.

Kerry Banks wrote about the environment fests of Michael and Michelle Tomichich and their two young daughters, Jazmin and Zoe, in the Nov./Dec. issue of the magazine Harrowsmith. The family, combined, produced only one-and-a-half bags of garbage in 1989. That's no typo, that's correct - one-and-a-half bags of garbage in one whole year.

They became strict adherents to the three R's (reduce, reuse and recycle) after returning to Canada from a three-year teaching mission in Zimbabwe.

Returning to a land of plenty after time spent in a poverty-stricken land imprinted on the Tomichich's how wasteful and selfish North American society really was.

They began participating in a community recycling program and strictly adhered to it. Food scraps are used as compost.

They buy their groceries in bulk and take along recycled plastic bags for produce, plastic containers for fish and their own cloth bags.

Their home-life has undergone a change. Only quarter-inch dabs of toothpaste are used and they use soap bars to wash their hair rather than shampoo. Shaving soap rather than shaving foam is

Colin Gibson

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used and disposable razors are never purchased. The family washes dishes with soap flakes, which contain no phosphates.

Homemade salad dressing, ketchup, etc., purchased in bulk, is stored either in recyclable glass bottles or refillable plastic containers.

Old clothing is donated to the needy; they write on both sides of a piece of paper and reuse envelopes whenever possible. Egg cartons are returned to the store.

A sign is posted on their front door that reads "We do not accept any flyers, ad mail or junk mail. We don't discuss religion or politics and we don't want to buy anything."

The Tomichich's keep a list of what they must throw into their one-and-a-half bags of garbage a year and are still looking at ways to cut down even more.

Into the garbage goes light bulbs, non-rechargeable batteries, toothpaste containers, Q-Tips, frozen juice containers, cereal box lining, wax paper and rubber gloves. Also, broken plates, and drinking glasses, and their children's refuse including stickers, gum and candy wrappers, shiny paper, clear cellophane paper and punctured balloons.

The Tomichich's have a basic philosophy - "Do what you can. Look at what you bring into your house. Look at your basic needs." Michael Tomichich adds, "I think you'll find that a lot of your needs are just wants."

Pretty high standards to live up to. However, our environment will reap the benefits of the sacrifices being made by families like the Tomichich's in making our world a better place in which to live.

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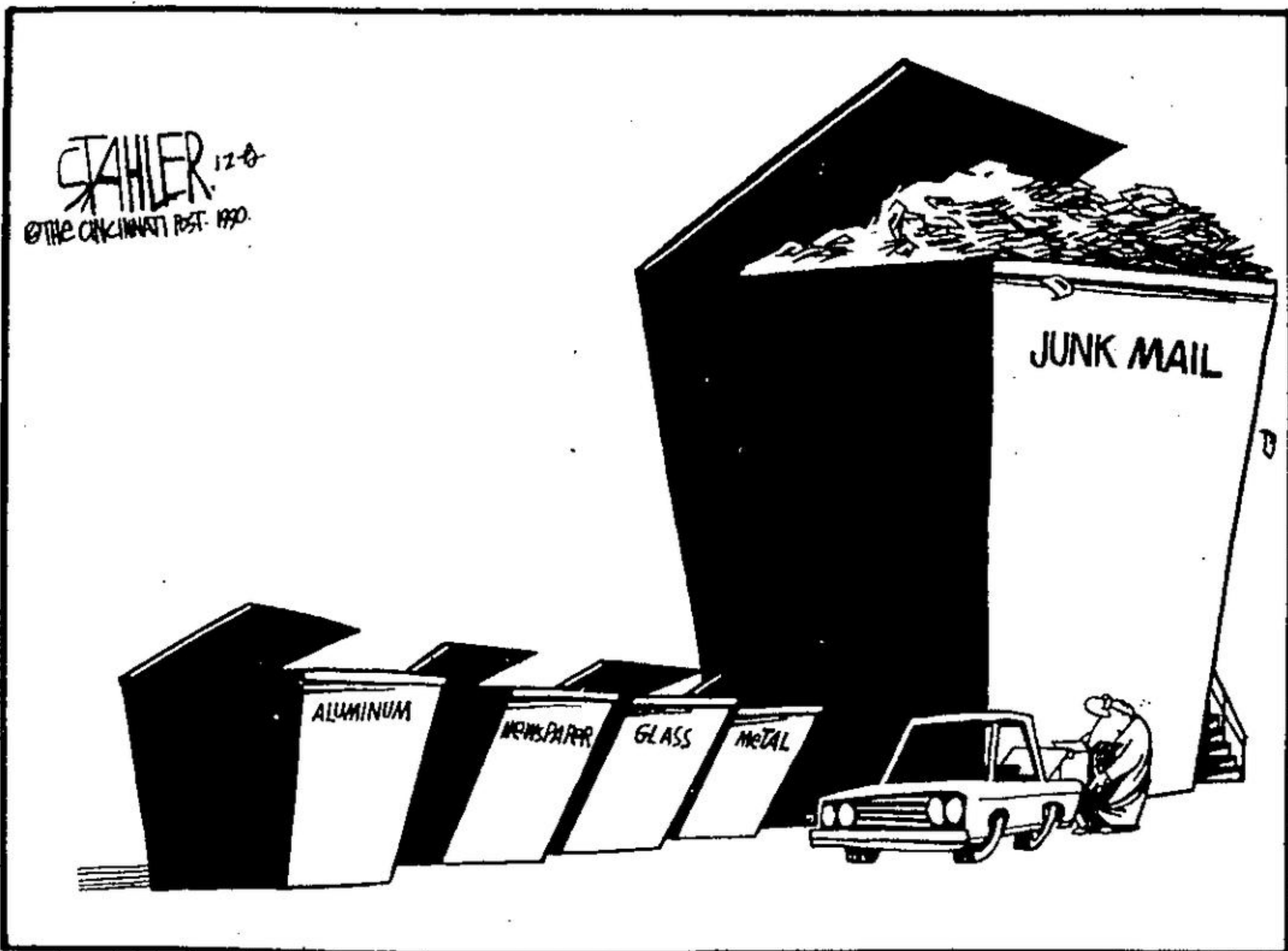
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Japanese god of underwear

At long last, one of the sensational secrets of Japan's success is revealed.

It seems part of Japan's amazing economic achievement can be attributed to the fact that it has a god of underwear.

I am not making this up. This fact is passed along to us by none other than The London Daily Telegraph, a newspaper so dry and respectable that it comes off the presses coated in two inches of dust.

The Telegraph has not been amused since Queen Victoria uttered her one and only witticism, and it would certainly not stoop to tomfoolery now.

According to The Telegraph, Japanese capitalists continue to pay homage to guardian spirits and local deities. For instance, Ebisu and Inari, the foremost gods of money in the Shinto religion, have shrines in commercial districts and miniature shrines in shops.

The paper adds: "Many corporations have their own guardian deities. For example, Wacoal - the country's top manufacturer of women's lingerie - has a shrine to the underwear deity, located next to its headquarters."

Well. At this point, the Western mind is permitted to boggle briefly.

Just for starters, let's ponder the question: What does the underwear deity look like? Is this a gentle goddess of lacey, frilly things, or a no-nonsense deity in corsets and support-stockings?

Is this deity truly unique in the annals of world religion? Or have scholars of comparative religion already posited a connection with



Ian Weir

Weir's View
Toronto News Service

believing in Racchus, god of snooker. As games grew tense, Sam was wont to pour libations on the floor and call loudly upon Racchus to shield him against severing.

This got us kicked out of a few pool halls. But it opened my eyes to a whole new way of seeing the world.

I'm not necessarily suggesting that we all get religious about everything we find mysterious and troubling. You'd look pretty silly offering incense to a malfunctioning computer, or crying "O Great Instabank Machine, pray disgorge my card, which you in your wrath have swallowed."

But there are certainly times when a religious approach would help.

We might feel better about the looming recession, for instance, if the Prime Minister were able to stand beside a small but tasteful shrine and explain: "The god of interest rates is angry, but we shall appease him. This is why Michael Wilson is wearing garlands of flowers and trying to look like a virgin."

In fact, I'm starting to persuade myself that part of our problem as Canadians is that there's far too little pagan religion in our everyday lives.

It may seem bizarre, but it clearly works - just witness Japan, mighty and prosperous home of the underwear deity. Indeed, this casts a whole new light on North America's abject inability to compete with the Japanese economic juggernaut.

What hope exists for a society which lacks so much as a Patron Saint of Boxer Shorts?

Poets' Corner

PEEKING THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

There I was in my perjamers,
After mommy tucked me in to sleep;
I new Santa Claus was coming,
Down the stairway I did creep!

With my dolly in my arms,
Tightly held; so mommy won't hear,
Step by step; and O so lightly,
Through the key hole I did peer.

There was Santa in his red coat,
He was holding mommy near;
And I seen him kiss my mommy
And I heard him call her "dear."

There were parcels and more gifts,
Strewn neath the Christmas tree;

There was Santa stealing mommy,
Leaving daddy and little me.

And I seen them holding hands,
As they dance around the tree;
He was calling her his darling,
(While his reindeer waited patiently).

Why didn't daddy come in soon?
Then ole Santa he would leave;
Wouldn't take my mommy,
And leave little me to grieve.

Mommy didn't know what I seen;
As through the keyhole as I peep;
She thought her little baby,
Was upstairs and fast asleep.

My eyes are filled with tears,
And my wee heart it is broke;
For ole Santa's taking mommy,
To the North Pole - that's no joke.

Clasping dolly to my pink perjamers,
I tread away up stairs;
Crawled into my little bed,
And I cried out all my cares.

It was early in the morning,
I awoke just to see
If old Santa had stole mommy,
From beneath our Christmas tree.

There lay mommy safely sleeping,
Holding daddy by the hand;
Santa hadn't taken mommy,
I was the gladdest baby in the land!

And I never tole my mommy
Through the key hole I was peeking;
And I seen her dancing,
And with Santa Claus a-speaking.

Hazel Lightle, Acton.