

'Green' is not just a buzzword

The senior demographic is quite possibly the best generation to emulate when trying to live an environmentally responsible lifestyle. That's because so many of the guidelines for being green are concepts that have been a part of seniors' lives for decades.

A portion of today's seniors grew up during the Depression, when recycling and conservation weren't the trends du jour, but survival strategies. In a time when money was scarce, many people made due with the resources they were dealt, stretching dollars just to stay afloat. Many of the concepts associated with today's environmental movement are strikingly similar to the ones employed during the Depression.

The behaviours of an elderly parent or grandparent that may have seemed eccentric or odd at one time are now turning out to be what many people are embracing in order to live green. Concepts like relying on reusable handkerchiefs instead of disposable tis-

suess; reusing lightly-soiled napkins; collecting discarded items from the curb and repairing them for renewed use; saving cans or food jars and using them to store other items; buying local products from smaller vendors; and similar things are methods of living ingrained in the persona of many older people.

Frugality and awareness of what things cost and what constitutes waste are other concepts seniors know well. Many have never adapted to the notion that products are disposable, preferring instead to hold onto appliances, electronics, clothing, and other items because they still have utility, not because the current season dictates they should be upgraded.

In 2008, Harris Interactive polled Baby Boomers ages 45 to 62 about their interest in the environment. Ninety-four percent of respondents said they took steps in the past 6 months to do something green. More than 80 percent were concerned about the environmental legacy that would be left

for their grandchildren.

While many seniors are going green today for altruistic reasons, it also makes good financial sense. Recycling items, conserving utilities and fuel and making smart choices can stretch a fixed income even further. Choosing to walk or ride a bike instead of getting behind the wheel may be not only environmentally friendly, but it's financially savvy as well.

Here are some ways of living straight out of the Great Depression that can be put to use today.

- Use the milkman. Although it may seem like the milkman is extinct, milk and other dairy products can still be delivered straight to a person's home from a local dairy or farm. Adding reusable milk bottles reduces the reliance on disposable containers, while buying local cuts down on the fuel costs necessary to transport products.

- Pass down clothing. Clothing that is gently worn can be passed down to children or even donated.

- Walk. During the De-

pression, cars were a luxury many people could not afford. Walking or taking a bus or train were some popular modes of transportation, and such options are still available today.

- Use cloth diapers and linens. Reusable items, like cloth diapers, handkerchiefs and linens, are more environmentally responsible.

- Get outdoors. Instead of relying on television, which had yet to be invented during the Depression, children and adults went outdoors to socialize and have fun.

- Open the windows. Instead of relying heavily on air conditioning, try opening the windows on nice days and let some fresh air in.

- Use clothes lines. Clothes dryers use about 10 to 15 percent of domestic energy in the U.S. A clothesline can help reduce electric bills and energy consumption.

- Get into gardening. If you can grow what you eat, that reduces the dependence on commercially produced and harvested crops.

Survey says Town wants Citizen input

The Town wants to know about how you feel about the services it provides. At Monday's Council meeting, Council approved the launch of a customer satisfaction survey to be conducted by Synovate - one of Canada's leading research consultants.

Council gets feedback from residents on a daily basis "about very specific concerns they may have" said Mayor Rick Bonnette, adding it is very important to us. Equally important however, is to hear from residents who may not have a specific reason to call the Town. The telephone survey is designed to provide an objective and statistically valid survey that covers several areas of importance to Town Council.

These areas include ranking both "the importance of" and "citizens satisfaction with" the various services the Town provides. A similar survey was conducted in 2005, and according to Ed DeSousa, Director of Corporate Services, "The results of this survey will allow us to measure the effectiveness of the service enhancements introduced since 2005."

A new focus on sustainability, which includes things like the local environment, economy, culture, and social inclusion, will also form part of the survey. The Town's Sustainability Advisory Committee will use citizen feedback to assist them in focusing on local priorities.

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