

Take Responsibility for the Community

By Denise M. Koopman

Recently, a woman wrote to the consumer action section of a newspaper to see if she could get some help. She noticed that the windows were dirty at the county hall of justice and that they hadn't been cleaned for more than four years. She wanted the consumer action service to..."get the county to have those windows washed and to put the building onto a regular schedule for keeping the windows clean."

The consumer action service replied that "the county won't budge and allot money to clean windows for its buildings," due to budget cuts. It then suggested that she started contacting members of the board of supervisors.

Whatever happened to helping out? Taking pride in our community? When you use a public restroom, do you wipe the counter around the sink when you've finished washing up? When you've finished at the grocery store, do you always return the shopping cart to the store? After the movie, do you put your candy wrappers and popcorn container in the garbage? Why do we feel that others should clean up for us while we are away from home?

After you have finished using a public telephone, you hang up the receiver. What if, from the first day that there were public telephones, there were employees whose only responsibility was to go around making sure that the telephone receivers were hung up on all public telephones. The public relied on these people to make sure that the receivers were in their place. Later, when budget cuts were made and this position was eliminated, what do you think people would do? They would fret and complain and say, "Oh, I wonder what's going to happen to all those telephone receivers that are just swinging in the wind. Can't we find some way to pay to have those hung up?"

It sounds pretty silly and yet that is what we are saying about so many "public comforts" that we currently take for granted. Why do we accept that we are expected to

hang up the receiver when we use a public telephone and yet we expect someone else to pick up after us in so many other ways?

There should be a volunteer organization that adopts a different government building each month. Once a month, the people of the community get together and clean the building, inside and out. Companies in the community would happily donate cleaning supplies and landscaping tools. Especially when they no longer have the added costs of paying someone to return carts to their store or constantly clean their restroom sinks. Signs could be posted: "This company gives because the community gives."

The fact is, the more each person does to help on their own, the less we need to find money to hire someone to clean up after us. If everyone in this town were to return their carts to the grocery stores, throw their litter in garbage cans, and wipe the counter when they use a public washroom, companies and governments would be able to afford to do more for their communities.

If the budget has been cut at City Hall and all the employees are now taking their trash baskets out to the dumpster each day, the question we should ask ourselves is, why weren't they doing that to begin with? We do it at home; why do we think we don't have to do it in public or while at work?

Not too long ago, curbside recycling and recycling on the job site was thought of as silly, inconvenient and not cost effective. Now, companies and governments boast about their recycling program, making their concern for the environment a part of their advertising. People are pitching in to recycle not only at home now, but at the office. Now that it's being done, it doesn't seem silly anymore. Companies and governments are saving money but it took every person participating to make it work. If wiping a counter or returning a grocery cart or picking up a piece of litter seems silly or inconvenient, just imagine how silly you would have felt if you were

one of the first people to start hanging up public telephone receivers but how proud you would feel now that everyone is doing it.

Denise Koopman is a Woodland homemaker who is concerned about the community. She is co-captain of her area Neighborhood Watch Program.

'Tis the Season...

In an effort to help individuals and families who would like to help out others connect with agencies that would love to have volunteers and/or donations, Child Care Services has put together a list:

Davis Crisis Pregnancy Center would appreciate maternity and baby clothes, bottles, blankets, diapers, baby carriers, cribs, play pens, strollers and care seats. Cash donations welcome. Call 753-0110.

Even Start Family Literacy Program needs volunteers to teach English and computer literacy. "Nice" prizes for monthly raffles and children's books, toys, clothing and household items for their "yard" sales are sought. Donations are tax deductible. Call Jackie or Drina at 375-7630.

International House Parent-Child Center needs riding toys like trikes, wagons, etc. The I-House Lending Closet needs sheets, towels and kitchen items. Call Elaine (Parent-Child) and Julia (Lending) at 753-5007.

Meals On Wheels provides meals to Davis residents. Children are invited to make small greeting cards to go with the holiday meals. Call Valta at 757-5696.

Progress Ranch would like to have books for children ages 5 to 12, stuffed animals, toys and games without too many pieces, and help with the holiday party. Call Russ or Carolyn at 753-2566.

Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Center
"Adopt" a family staying at Harper House by contributing gifts, gift certificates for fun things kids can do (ex: a movie pass), or food including snacks that kids like or specific cultural foods. Baby strollers are also needed. Contact Gail at 661-6336.

Sister Friends Moms in recovery and their Sister Friends will be producing holiday crafts this season. They could use help with both production and supplies.

Call Mary Jo Bryan at 666-8650.

STEAC- Short Term Emergency Aid Committee
Adopt a family program; donation of canned foods; and cash. Call 758-5444.

Suicide Prevention of Yolo County always needs cash donations and volunteers for the phone lines. Call 756-7542.

Summer House care and independent living for developmentally disabled adults would like cash donations to help furnish their remodeled living room. PO Box 1724, Woodland, CA 95776. Call 662-8493.

Teen Parent Center in Winters would like to have diapers and wipes of all sorts in all sizes, a classroom flag and a typewriter table. Call Edna at 795-0457.

Teen Parent Center in Woodland would like to have maternity clothes, baby clothes and baby furniture. Call 668-3768

West Sacramento Christmas Basket Project needs donation of food items to make Christmas dinners such as canned goods, baby food, stuffing and cash to buy turkeys. Unwrapped toys and volunteers to help sort and pack boxes, and sign up Christmas basket recipients are also needed. Donations are tax deductible. Call Helena at 371-1563.

West Sacramento Senior Center needs volunteers to help with many tasks and donations of items such as book shelves, a furniture dolly, a laser printer, pool table lights, chairs, tables, a garbage disposal and an espresso machine. Call Susan at 373-5819.

Yolo County Library - Davis could use videos for both children and adults for their new video collection. 315 E. 14th Street Call 757-5593.

Yolo County Library - Winters Friends of the Library will be raffling off Raggedy Ann and Andy Dolls. Call the library at 795-4955 for the date of the drawing. A camera, vacuum cleaner, color ink jet printer, books and bookshelves, and quiet games or toys for children to use after school are also needed.

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