

opinion/editorial

Progress cannot stop our environment

Happy Thanksgiving. During this much-awaited and much-needed break from academic pressure, we should abide by tradition and identify those things for which each of us can be thankful.

While we enjoy our festive meals and family activities, realizing our good fortune over others in the world, an effort should be made to hope that future Thanksgivings are as enjoyable.

Each of us likely will eat all too well on Thursday. We have a right to be thankful for that, and to be thankful for our lifestyles. Perhaps it is appropriate to think of the world's starving people, but this holiday is to enjoy what we have not what somebody else doesn't have.

But there are some harsh realities about our own meals that we should be aware of, if for no other reason so we can have more of the same in future generations.

Chemicals and pesticides that slowly burn away at the earth's fertility will enable our food to be so good, and so plentiful. Burning oil and other natural resources will enable us to stay warm. Various resources also were used in erecting our shelter.

Perhaps more than anything else Thursday, we should be thankful for what is left of the earth. Untapped energy reserves, slowly disappearing forests, mountains too awesome to be leveled by man's technology—all offer hope for future Thanksgivings.

Of course it would not be a traditional Thanksgiving if we didn't think about the Pilgrims and the Indians. It was a beautiful, unconquered continent on which they dined, reasonably free of technological device and human prejudice.

Every mountain and every tree was something man had to make use of, just for survival. The undeveloped landscape was not a refreshing natural beauty preserved only by government protection; it was a challenge—an enemy of life.

Now, after conquering the elements on this continent by finding ways to cope with its winters, by learning to live and grow things on its vast prairie and even in its desert and mountains, we find ourselves back at square one.

Our chemicals and technologies take from the earth and put back pollutants. Our population grows until people have to live on chemical

dump sites, their water has to be heavily treated and the air is not always safe.

Now, like the first settlers, every mountain and tree must be used to its fullest potential. But unlike the first settlers, there is not plenty to go around for much longer. Our technology has taken from the earth; now it must continue to provide for us while preserving what is left in nature.

The signs are all around us, transmitted in so what tones at the end of newscasts—Love Canal, nuclear waste, diminishing tropical forests, radioactive clouds from Chinese thermonuclear tests, the scarcity of oil. We must learn to see them.

That should be our hope; that we will see the signs, and put together the pieces of the puzzle. And hope is that for which we can be most thankful on Thursday.

We can be thankful and hopeful in our realization that man's progress was unable to stop the power of Mount St. Helens. The elements still rule, and like the Pilgrims, we must learn to survive within the dynamics of our environment.

Parent is disturbed by real-ideal conflict

BOSTON—It was dark outside and snowing. The first flakes of the year, always silent and magical, had begun coming down, covering the cars, the streets, even cars around their houses.

For one night at least, it seemed that any griminess in the world would be, could be, whitewashed.

But inside the house, the people in front of the television set were watching the newest version of an old story, "The Diary of Anne Frank."

William Goodman

The background of Anne's life in her family's hideaway was not new to the brown-ups. They watched the performance with a different eye, a different hide. But the girl beside them wasn't as tough.

She had not learned yet to take magazine covers of starving children off the breakfast table. She had not learned to discuss the inhumane intellectually. She had not learned what grown-ups learn: To put pain in its place.

She was still a child who closed her eyes at scary parts in the movies. . . and was afraid of Anne's Nazi murderers.

When it was over, well past her bedtime, the girl turned to her mother and said didn't ask, but said "That couldn't happen here."

Her mother paused for a moment and answered honestly, "I hope not."

The girl, unsatisfied, got under her guilt and said dietically, "I just want you to tell me that everything is going to be ok until I grow up." The mother answered, "I know you do, I'd like to tell you that, too."

They had been here before, talking about cancer and war, accidents and evil. At some of these moments, the girl wanted a gift of reassurance. The mother wanted to give it to her. The child wanted protection. The parent wanted to protect. It is in the nature of things, of parent and child things.

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Yet somehow as the girl grew older, her mother was unable or unwilling to frost reality with an inch of fresh snow. She was reluctant to give false assurances.

When the girl was a baby, safety was a matter of putting covers on electrical sockets and gates on stairways. Now, this mother was far more conscious of her own inability to protect her child's safe world.

Halfway to adulthood, children have been armed with their own awareness.

But it wasn't quite that simple. There are always the contradictions. We don't want to frighten the kids and don't want to lie to them. We want to be realistic but not ghoulish. We want to make them feel secure but not sanguine.

She knew a woman who parented by terror. The woman's mind was a file full of every known childhood disaster from crib death to choking. She enlarged her list of cautions until her sons were straightjacketed in her paranoia. Yet the children remained, like all of us, vulnerable to accidents and events.

She knew a woman who floated into a college dormitory untouched and out of touch. She was almost blessedly unaware of bad intentions, of the dark side of human nature. But the very first blow—a flawed man, not an evil one—left her crippled.

Parents are the careful people. We want to wrap the children in gauze. We want to save them from war, disease, evil. We have an investment in believing the world will be good to them.

But we are equally aware they may be caught between the ideal and the real world. Between their good impulses and the dangers.

So we tell them to be trusting and not take candy from strangers. We tell them to be generous and not let anybody take advantage of them. We tell them to believe that people are good and watch out for those who are evil.

We worry that some will be trapped, like Anne Frank at the end of her diary and life, "trying to find a way of becoming what I would so like to be and what I could be, if there weren't any other people living in the world"—if there weren't any evil in the world.

The mother watched the snow falling past the window next to her daughter's bed. She wanted to paint and promise a safe world. . . but she didn't. This is, she thought, one of the things parents do. We supervise our children's loss of innocence before the world does it for us.

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to the editor

In response to Kathy Chenault's Nov. 17 article, I simply cannot believe that Kathy Chenault's idea of space exploration is simply a quest for "galactic bragging rights" and that it would be too expensive for our nation's economy.

Teflon, garage door openers, heart pacemakers, satellite communications, computer technology, integrated circuit chips and the library of new knowledge of the human body and its physiological functions are only some of the offsprings of the research carried out during space exploration years.

Hundreds of new industries and countless jobs, both now and in the future, could be generated by the space exploration industry. Wouldn't these jobs help bring

about the economic recovery we seek? Part of our economy today is the space exploration industry. We wouldn't be helping our ailing economy by cutting back on the space program. Rather, we would be killing its potential to help the economy.

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