

## Toothbrushes & Others

by BRIAN LOCKHART

I was reading an interesting post the other day someone had put on Facebook.

It was about a younger girl chiding an older woman for asking for a plastic bag for her groceries.

The girl explained that the woman should be more conscience of the environment and that plastic bags were bad.

The older woman then went on to explain a whole lot of environmental issues to the girl and pretty much shut down her argument ? and a lot of arguments that many environmental activists use but don't consider or practice in daily life.

The post didn't say how old the woman was, but she had obviously lived through the 50s when things were done differently.

Plastic bags themselves are of a least concern to the environment if used properly. As one expert explained, you could take thousands and thousands of those bags, and they can be compressed into a small cube less than a square foot in size.

The problem with plastic bags is people don't dispose of them properly. When you see them blowing in the wind across fields or caught in a branch on the side of the road, it's because someone tossed them out of a car window or was too careless to properly use them.

Plastic bottles are a big issue. The big beverage companies used to have a system where pop was sold in glass bottles that could be returned for your deposit back and the bottle reused.

According to Greenpeace, the Coca-Cola company alone, produced 100 billion plastic bottles in 2016 ? and they are just one company. Most of those are never recycled.

On top of that, drinking water from plastic bottles adds to the problem. Your tap water is just as safe as bottle water despite the clever marketing campaigns by water companies to convince you that their H2O is somehow better.

A news story from a couple of years ago revealed that a well-known water bottling company's ?safer? drinking water, came from the public tap in Mississauga. They just put it in a bottle, gave it a fancy name and sold it to consumers who paid for the same water they got from the home faucet.

That's pretty clever marketing.

I was at a baseball game the other day. The ground in a local park was littered with garbage and plastic water bottles left over from spectators.

I'll bet almost everyone who left a bottle behind claims to ?protect the environment? by bringing their own bags to the grocery store.

How many ?environmentalists? use disposal diapers for their babies?

Disposable diapers may be convenient, but they are not environmentally friendly ? at all. If you could see a mountain of disposable diapers that are tossed away in a single year, you would be astonished.

I'll bet you didn't have a single environmental friend that used reusable cloth diapers.

I was in a home recently owned by a guy who is part of a local environmental group. He's a nice guy and well intentioned, however I did notice there were at least four television sets, and that was just on the first floor. I wasn't going to point out that modern TV sets only last a handful of years and probably will just end up in the landfill.

If someone really is that concerned about the environment, wouldn't a single television or maybe two be enough?

Here's one you may not have thought of ? toothbrushes. This was actually pointed out to me the other day by a woman who makes and sells environmentally safe tooth brushes.

Pretty much everyone has at least one toothbrush. In North America alone, that's over 592 million tooth brushes perched in their little holder in the bathroom at one time - and most likely you buy several each year.

All those plastic handles have to go somewhere. According to my tooth brush friend who did her homework ? thus the environmentally friendly model ? there are millions of them floating in the world's oceans.

On the same note, consider disposable razors, of which again, there are millions and millions. Once that tiny little blade is finished, you toss the entire razor, including the plastic handle in the garbage, where it will remain for around 50,000 years.

I'm not claiming to be the most environmentally perfect guy ? far from it. Just the other day I was at an outdoor event in the blazing sun and a vendor offered me a bottle of water from his cooler, which I accepted. I was really, really thirsty.

I'm just saying the older lady in the above-mentioned story did make a few good points.