

Water crisis: yesterday's waste, tomorrow's lack



JERRY CAMMARATA FATHER'S DIARY

AS IT WAS

The book of Genesis, particularly chapter one, offers an orderly account of God's great creation. With incalculable skill, all conceivable nuances of interaction were accounted for and the task of assembling a great world took place: God made the light, the sky, the water, the land, the stars, the planets, the animals and man.

And God gave man and animals to a lesser degree capabilities to use judgement, tools and the surrounding world as instruments of survival. The intent, I feel, was always to achieve a 'balance' of all that exists and never to violate this.

Slowly, but surely, the great divine orderly creation of the world is suffering from imbalance because of misuse and abuse. Just think of what people through the ages have done, solely by wars, to reduce the resources of the world. We have had an abusive impulse to rid our land of God's creatures and have done a magnificent job at that. Our waters now only possess five great white whales, the elephant is disappearing because ivory is needed for rings and necklaces and the wild American buffalo cannot even be found in any significant quantity for us to further exploit them in a western movie. Perhaps we can live without white whales, elephants, buffalos, great temples, public halls and works of art of yesteryear, but we cannot live without, for example, the basics—like water.

WATER CRISIS

Each of us is responsible for maintaining the 'balance' of the world. When imbalance is brought to our attention we must work as a public family to bring about a return

to balance. The tristate area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut is now suffering from

a water drought. The Mayor of New York City, Edward Koch, has issued a water emergency and is telling us to act maturely and with reserve in order to conserve water and reestablish the 'balance'. This is not been done by all of us, however.

I, for one, live in the New York City area and have listened to reports of the water crisis but have not really made a concerted effort. The mayor, knowing the lack of sensitivity to important issues people have, took the wise approach in this situation by getting the kids involved in cracking the whips on the moms and pops to save water.

My daughters decided to crack the whip on my wife and I and it worked. Imagine the shock of getting up one morning with only the left eye capable of opening up significantly

enough to see your way into the shower and then, while enjoying a steaming and long shower, a small hand invades your privacy and turns the shower off, hands you a towel while the other hand is covering her eyes? Can you imagine what its like brushing your teeth and as the brush is passing aggressively over your first and second upper left molars, the water is shut off? Can you also imagine what it's like loading the dishwasher with the evening meal's plates and utensils, turning it on, only to have it suddenly stopped by a Deputy Mayor of New York City—in your very home?

A CONFESSION

After having the water turned off on us all day, our girls finally lowered the boom. Elizabeth and Michelle sat my wife and I down in the living room and proceeded to provide a lecture on how we were violating the mayor's orders to conserve water. As newly appointed deputy mayors in charge of saving water (all children in New York City have been designated as deputy mayors in charge of saving water), the girls told us our waste and misuse of water must stop immediately. Our girls prepared a list of things we all

have to do so the water consumption could be reduced. Some of the strategies they thought of and others they read about or discussed in class. Starting immediately we could only take six minute showers. Special lines were placed in the bathtub so accurate levels of water could be maintained. Special washers were inserted in our faucets to reduce the flow of water. The dishwasher could only be used when it was completely filled. Their list of demands went on and on. If our family was going to work and be responsible, well, my wife and I got the message very quickly that we have to do our part and do it fast.

After implementing the suggestions our girls had given, we began to check the differences in the amount of water we were using. Surprisingly, by being more responsible in the way we were now using water, we were saving between 150 to 200 gallons of water a week for a family of four. Just think what this would mean if every family tried to conserve water. Our girls certainly opened up our eyes—the mayor knows how to get to his constituents!

WHAT ABOUT TOMORROW

Elizabeth and Michelle have once again reaffirmed in my mind that this

Koch's 'deputies' launch own efforts to conserve water: letter

Dear Mr. Mayor:

I want to thank you for making my sister Elizabeth and I Deputy Mayors in charge of saving water. The job is not easy but we will do our very best.

I have given some suggestions in our house already and I would like to share them with you. My dad made sure that the shower in our house has a special washer in it to reduce the amount of water coming out. My mom went out and bought an egg timer with a bell. Now we can take a shower for exactly six minutes and not waste water. I thought I couldn't

do it in such a short time. My father almost threw the egg timer out the window. But he is our superpop and helps us to learn many things, including learning about conserving water.

The other day I caught my father brushing his teeth and leaving the water running. I asked him to turn the water on and off as he needed it so all that good water doesn't go down the drain.

I think if my sister and I just try to make things better at our house, we will be doing a good job for you. Once

we can get things working well at home we'll start at grandma's house and then the aunts and uncles. I did tell my teacher what I'm doing and she said we would discuss it in class.

I hope you are saving water at your house. Do the people at Gracie Mansion remember to turn the faucet off tightly so no drips occur? My grandfather knows how to fix leaking pipes if you need him. He already works for you so you can ask him to go to Gracie Mansion instead of the subways.

Thanks,
Michelle Cammarata, age 7

life is not just for me, my wife, our friends, you or your friends. This life is just a moment of time that must not be wasted, abused or misused so as to reduce its potential to assist our children and their children in achieving success and prosperity. We seem to live for today and not tomorrow.

My children have converted me. They were good teachers. I hope they feel I was a good student. I certainly hope the availability of water does

not go the way of the great white whale, the elephant or American buffalo. Maybe the family will once again come to the rescue and, through dialogue and interaction, adults and kids can put life into perspective. Maybe mayor Koch can make a list of the problems facing our city and then deputize the kids to solve the problems.

How about it Mr. mayor—my daughters got me to change.



Mayor Ed Koch