

Guest Column

Our Roadside Litter

By THE BOURNE RECYCLING COMMITTEE

Have you noticed the increase in litter along some roads in Bourne?

Why is this? Do we feel compelled to make it worthwhile for the prisoners picking it up? Do we like our cars clean and free of clutter? Can we blame the car manufacturers for not providing a convenient wastebasket in the cars? Are the fines not high enough? Is our self-image that of a free spirit rather than an up-tight neatnik? Do we not care how our town looks? Can we improve this situation?

Some towns have annual cleanup days. In Sudbury, one couple took it upon themselves to list all the roads in town and recruit volunteers to select one or more roads to clean up on a certain day. Large plastic bags were available from town hall for their use. When full, the bags were left by the side of the road to be picked up by town trucks later. Many continued on during the year, cleaning "their roads." Any other ideas?

Though not a top priority in Bourne, the DPW does send out a pickup truck as needed or in response to a call. In the spring and summer they also clean up the parks and the beaches. This doesn't cost the town extra but does take time from the workers' other duties. In addition, inmates from the Barnstable County Correctional Facility pick up the state roads such as Route 28 and Route 6. The state Department of Transportation Highway Division decides the work location, the county sheriff supplies the inmates and correction officers and the whole program is funded by the state (us).

There are state and town bylaws covering littering. For instance, throwing a lighted cigarette on the road is a state crime. The town bylaws carry a \$50 fine but there is a proposal to increase this to \$300. We are lucky to have a Residential Recycling Center that accepts so many recyclable items along with our trash at a very reasonable subsidized rate. In towns without this, the littering is much higher.

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