

What's Happening in Our Society?

by Janet Jagan

I believe I'm not alone in wondering what is happening to people, or more specifically, why people are behaving as they do. Admittedly, I'm quite old and old pastures look greener as I sometimes compare the past with the present.

I reacted strongly to a recent newspaper item bearing the headline "GWI Plagued by Vandalism – millions being spent to replace cables, other materials." The news item described how Guyana Water Inc. (GWI) suffered the loss of its cables at the Agricola Water Pump station and this had left several villages without potable water supplies. Apparently the cables, costing millions of dollars, are being sold to scrap metal dealers for export. Not only are cables being vandalized for sale, but cast iron sewage chambers are being stolen, which re-



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sults in the uncovered manholes being used to dump trash and garbage. This, in turn, leads to the malfunctioning of pumps.

The telephone and electricity companies, too, have reported with sickening frequency, the theft of their cables and materials used in those services as well as the massive theft of electricity by thousands of householders.

So, these wanton acts of vandalism, theft and careless dumping lead to heavy losses by these service industries, malfunctioning of

the utility services provided and obviously, ultimately, higher rates to consumers. Has this been going on for many years, or is it a new phenomenon? I can't remember such disgusting and destructive behaviour, say 40 or 50 years ago. But then, that's a long time ago and things and people's behaviour have changed considerably. I believe we are not unique. I've read of such happenings in other countries, particularly, the theft of electricity power.

Has criminality grown, or are small crimes like theft of cables and electricity becoming more acceptable when viewed next to mass killings like we have had here recently and notoriously at colleges and malls in the USA?

I've lived in Bel Air for about 40 years and have passed the Sea Wall Road more times than I could ever count. It's only in recent years that we have witnessed

the abomination that takes place several times a week when people throw everything but "the kitchen sink" onto the grass next to the ancient wall. People have been walking the sea wall for

decades and never before was there this wanton littering that is now a regular sight – but not only there, but everywhere.

Something is wrong, very wrong, when people willfully and consciously destroy what helps them. Is it a result of the lowering of the influence of the family system, the failure of the education system to teach our children how to live in a modern society or is it the influences of the new and newer technology, which, to some extent, eliminate individual responsibility?

Am I "old-fashioned," a relic of the past, when I remember when peo-

ple did not throw rubbish willy-nilly all over the place? It's not only unsightly, but dangerous to the environment and, as well, clogging up drainage canals and trenches that help relieve

flooding all over Guyana. Years ago, we didn't have fast foods and plastic containers that people seem to enjoy throwing all over the place, making what could be beautiful, ugly, and hurting the mechanisms which help

alleviate flooding and sanitation.

Something is wrong, very wrong, when people willfully and consciously destroy what helps them. Is it a result of the lowering of the influence of the family system, the failure of the education system to teach our children how to live in a modern society or is it the influences of the new and newer technology, which, to some extent, eliminate individual responsibility? Our sociologists should be analyzing and giving guidance on how to shift this terrible trend that is self destroying and inhibiting man's responsibility to nature, to society, to his/her family and the preservation of the environment.

And part of this deterioration we see daily, is also in the rat-race of who can say and do the nastiest things to prevent changes, advances and harmony in our society.