

# There's a lot of talk, desire to recycle, but no place to take them

## COMMENTARY

By SEBASTIAN DE ASSIS

Unquestionably, the 1990s will be the decade of expanding awareness about the necessity of recycling on behalf of the Earth's survival. Everyone seems to be somewhat involved in this effort to prevent the environment from succumbing into the catastrophic squander of earth's ever-depleting resources.

In spite of my determination to collaborate in this vital task, I sometimes feel frustrated with the lack of infrastructure regarding the recycling program on Maui. Except for a few conscientious community members — The Maui Recycling Group — and some businesses as well, there isn't any government agency sponsoring or stimulating the recycling initiative.

Frequently, one hears and reads about the extraordinary importance of recycling in our excessive wasteful society. Nevertheless, particularly from the public administration officials. This irresponsible inertia is generating an impasse in the development of an effective recycling system.

Although The Maui Recycling Group has already begun the process, the success of its initiative must be supported by an infrastructure promoted by governmental authorities, which will allow every citizen in the community to participate in the recycling system. Propaganda, education, incentive and drop-off stations conveniently located throughout the island are a few of the alternatives the public administration machinery has at its disposal. It certainly is a costly measure, however the urgency of the situation makes the investment worthwhile.

My experience with recycling on Maui has been quite frustrating. Recently I purchased a merchandise

whereon the package was written: "This package is recyclable. Please do your part." I unwrapped the content and placed the package aside to do "my part," as requested by the responsible manufacturer. However, after pondering about what was I supposed to do with my recyclable trash. I felt utterly frustrated.

On another occasion, I saved every empty bottle I came across until my limited garage space was filled up with several cardboard boxes containing hundreds of bottles. I patiently waited for the recycle day which as far as I am concerned it should be held 365 days a year — to turn in my material. Unfortunately, when I brought them over, I was told they wouldn't accept glass items because there wasn't any glass recycling recipient on Maui. Again, I was disappointed that my cooperative effort was thwarted by lack of support.

I soon realized that rhetoric about recycling is as wasteful as the trash itself, unless there is an organized supportive apparatus program to back up the demand. Consequently, the active participation of the public administration is sine qua non; otherwise, recycling will be relegated to a limited number of conscientious citizens who struggle to get the job done. A viable recycling program is indispensable in order to encourage every single member of the community to play his or her essential individual role.

I pay an annual fee for my weekly refuse collection. I would pay an additional fee to have another refuse collecting day exclusively for recyclable material. I am confident the majority of the community members would concur, as we all know that the extra money we spend now may save an entire planet for future generations.

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