

Crime and Criminals

The Times They Have Ahh...Changed or Not

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I honestly think it started around 1980. Before that time things were different. People took their dogs for a walk in their neighborhood; pets peed on trees and the ol' standard, yellow fire hydrants. Dogs pooped on someone's lawn or their bushes. The dog owners waited until the doggy business concluded, and on they went. But that changed, didn't it?

The feelings of violation of property rights arose. Homeowners watched or found a stranger's dog doo in their front yard, and this caused anger. The homey idea of "Well your dog poops in my yard and my dog poops in yours" meaning, this balances out, so why fuss? "Dogs poop, so get over it." Some homeowners didn't own a dog, others never walked theirs. Cats are an entirely different matter and I will not go there.

Public parks policy leaned into a need for regulations of multi-use public property. Some dog owners thought of local parks as "the place" for exercise and pooping. I think the foundation of that simple truth cracked and split open nearly 40 years ago. Society's solution: clean up after your pet. Responsibility wasn't reborn, just highlighted.

There developed two means: carry a small shovel and a plastic bag, or the park supply the bags, and the dog owner picks up the still warm poop in a fondless grip of the hand. At the park, there were garbage cans to drop the baggies into. Whilst walking your dog around the neighborhood, what does one do with the bagged, unwanted deposit? If a neighbor had a garbage can close by, it wasn't (and still isn't) kosher to put your trash into theirs without first getting permission. Getting caught by the can owner might not be a pleasant exchange—*of words.*

It's similar to the couple of dozen states that have enacted smoke-free laws covering workplaces, restaurants, and bars. Breathing someone's undesired tobacco smoke has lessened dramatically, as is stepping on or cleaning up cigarette butts.

I believe this change in American culture started an old, but newly fashioned snowball rolling down the hill of reality. Perhaps, zeitgeist is the word. Scholars have long maintained that each era has a unique spirit, a nature or climate that sets it apart from all other epochs. In German, such a spirit is known as "zeitgeist." Since the early 1980s, perhaps, the concept of responsibility took bigger baby steps until the feet filled the shoes of U.S. Presidents—think Nixon and Clinton. The spread of this trend now fills Hollywood with secrets of Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby and so many others. Politics had Anthony Weiner and a long line of dirty dominoes followed, each with a name. The robes of Popes have hid child molesters and endless

abusing, by the fake pious priests. Pastors who were worthy of a listen, have dishonored the integrity of those seeking faithfulness. Sports fans included, are let down by the not-so private lives of favored athletes. This lot has taken advantage of the ceaseless way it's always been and held resistant to accommodate change. But now we have backlash, legal backlashes and then some, in a variety of popular exposure.

I'm forgetting those names which fill every category, you are probably thinking of them no doubt. Corrupt leaders and those we've placed in power and into the spotlight, have become prevalent—much thanks to Internet sites, smartphones, social media, TV and old-fashioned print. I'd call this an exposure of the attempts and successful heist of morality. As the dog walkers of old, without shame, these people leave poop for others to accept as their unasked for responsibility. The innocent among us, unexpectedly step in stinky, warm, dog doo. Our flowers are pissed on and trodden down by four uncaring paws minded by two-footed walkers.

Now, years gone by, those who acted dishonestly are finding themselves being found out, and out of a job. The jury box isn't filled with paid-for-fools. Judges and prosecutors are calling out the sneaky, criminal behavior of those in all walks of authority who have used and abused. Oh so many of them "mis-spoke" and when caught, quickly "apologize" while the media loops news and we turn up the volume. Courts are flooded with decadent celebrities who have over indulged personal vanities to their peril. The vast list of damaged victims has shaken us.

A turd from a classy canine is still just a turd and sensible to avoid.

A momentum for trustworthiness, a craving for safe guides, cautiously continues—for we need them. Where did good people go? Everyone is now under suspicion—everyone. Caring for others causes a questioning of motives. If you take a stand for truth, expect an investigation. Guard your rear because canine teeth chomp and tear.

No, this changing isn't the hoped for Age of Aquarius of not too many years ago (peace and understanding, sympathy and trust abounding, no more falsehoods and derisions, let the sunshine in). Charles Manson tore down that dream of moral harmony. It's a situation where justice is catching up and sadly, there's an abundance to round up and take down.

In conclusion, certain dogs should always be kept in high-fenced backyards, out of sight, or when near the public, only on short sturdy leashes, tight collars, and muzzled.