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Cleaning up is just a good neighbor policy for Boyd

December 20, 2007
By Tess Wolfe

GREEN To his neighbors on Laburnum Drive, John Boyd's twice-daily walks are a welcome sight.

"You knew who he was the first year you were here in the allotment," Eric Seiler, who has lived with his family in Tamarack Estates for almost 15 years, "Because if you were going to work early, or coming home, he was there, taking care of things."

Boyd, 79, is a one-man recycling patrol. Each time he walks through the development, he picks up roadside litter and debris left by others, waving at each passerby with a warm smile as he goes by.

"Don't throw it down – pick it up," Boyd said. "I came from that kind of family."

A recent widower whose wife, Betty, passed away from cancer last summer, he began taking walks twice each day when he retired from Goodrich 10 years ago.

"If there's more than one beer can, I take an old grocery bag and stick it in there," Boyd said. "Last week, I came back with two bags full. I don't understand why something thinks it's OK to take a can of beer and throw it in someone's front yard, like it will disappear."

During the last election season, Seiler stopped his car when he saw Boyd picking up campaign literature that was blowing from yard to yard.

"He was looking pretty overloaded with election literature," Seiler said. "I commented to him that I think we'll all be glad when election day is over. He just smiled at me – he had fliers coming out of his pockets and everywhere – and just looked at me, like, "This is so unnecessary."

Boyd not only picks up eyesores, but also finds items people are throwing away that he refurbishes and donates.

"People are always going to have stuff they don't want and need to get rid of," he said. "I give the stuff away. Like box fans – I bring them home, clean and lubricate them. I wash the grills in the dishwasher. I can't tell you how many fans I've reconditioned."

When his church had a white elephant sale last month, Boyd donated two bicycles, four electric scooters and a barbecue grill – all recovered from the curb, set out for garbage collection, and refurbished by Boyd.

"Why would you throw that stuff out and put it in a landfill?" Boyd asked.

Boyd said he picks up litter because he doesn't want the trash lying around the neighborhood.



Photo by Tess Wolfe HELPING OUT John Boyd sweeps the streets of his neighborhood during his morning walk.

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"I don't exactly know how I got started picking up, but I do it," he said.

Seiler said people as considerate as Boyd are hard to find these days.

"He just thinks that's what's supposed to be done, and doesn't think otherwise," Seiler said. "He's always putting other people ahead of himself."

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