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## Some good things are happening

**Chester Smolski**

It is easy to be critical and to single out the wrongs of society: the reporting of such wrongs is what sells newspapers. Too often the good things that happen are not recognized nor deemed newsworthy, and the result is they go unnoticed. So it was more than refreshing to read recently in these papers about some very positive actions on the part of a private citizen, a small business, and yes, even a politician — actions that are helping to make our communities better places in which to live.

It took months of effort on the part of a North Providence resident to finally get bureaucratic permission to beautify, in her own inimitable way, the plaza on the north front of our State House in Providence. Ursulla Winter's determination paid off, and now brightly colored marigolds add a little color to the outside beauty of the building. This concerned woman and her Rhode Island Citizens Act Now group hope to continue this work and involve other civic minded organizations to bring into our lives a little beauty, some added pride and, in her own words, "raise your spirits."

In the six weeks that the J.R. Sav-on Liquor store on Benefit Street in Pawtucket started its own recycling of aluminum cans undertaking, it has collected, on a weekly average, close to 2,000 cans, or the equivalent of 80 pounds of recyclable aluminum. Paying for the return of these aluminum cans means that parking lots, vacant areas, ball fields and other favorite dumping grounds are getting cleaned. By whom? In one instance it was a 7-year-old who comes in with his grandmother every Saturday to return two empty cases. In the words of the owners, "It's a great way to promote recycling and, at the same time, help clean up the city."

Cleaning up the city, in the case of Providence, is not easy but the political leadership is now turning to the task. The "Cianci War on Litter" is being organized with appointment of a litter board, proposals for new ordinances, better enforcement and proposed use of volunteers, community groups and some welfare recipients. To be officially launched on Oct. 21, the program will be matched with the ongoing work of the Downtown Providence Improvement Association, the private, merchant-funded group that has been making valiant endeavors during the year to stem the tide of litter clogging our downtown streets.

When the mayor of the capital city states that "our goal is to make Providence the cleanest city in America," he realizes, of course, that it will take more than sustained city efforts to achieve this goal. It will also necessitate help from the state in the form of bottle bill legislation, something that, to date, has not been forthcoming.

Attempts in the General Assembly to pass legislation requiring deposits on bottles and aluminum cans have been getting stronger and, in time, will prevail because special interest groups, including certain bottle manufacturers, small businesses and some unions, can no longer prevent this long-needed legislation.

The governor also must do his part and not say, as he did in the past, that he would sign the bill only if his counterpart in Massachusetts did the same. This leaves him open to charges that he lacks leadership, should he stick to this obsequious position. And the lieutenant governor, who previously shunted off the measure to a legislative committee where it was thought it would die, must act in a positive manner. Our political leadership must speak for all of us, not special interests or residents of another state.

Yes, it is encouraging to read of the positive actions on the part of some of our citizens and to realize that change for the better can be initiated from such small endeavors. It took \$100,000 of state money to compose a song and give publicity to the fact that this is a state of which all of us can be proud. It would be much cheaper, more efficient and longer lasting if the General Assembly and our state political leaders passed a bottle bill in their next session to give us cleaner cities and a cleaner state, for then we could justifiably be proud.

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