

The Sweet Smell of Consumerism

☒ Marcel Proust wrote in *The Remembrance of Things Past*, “when nothing else subsists from the past, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls bearing resiliently, on tiny and almost impalpable drops of their essence, the immense edifice of memory.”

I agree. When I smell a certain type of grass, I’m transported back in time to my aunt’s home in Connecticut – a place where I associate my fondest childhood memories. Florist shops always remind me of the many funerals I attended as a child. What most people consider an unwanted musty smell, also reminds me of my aunt’s basement and good feelings.

I can’t see a thing without my glasses and my husband claims I have selective hearing, but I have an acute sense of smell. Because I have this gift, I always have a wide selection of body washes, perfumes, potpourri and candles on hand.

But what I think of as normal personal hygiene and good housekeeping has been taken to a whole ‘nother level.

As much as I love the scent of vanilla in just about anything, I really think Glad Products has gone a bit too far. Glad, along with other companies such as Hefty have, in my opinion, created a “problem” which really wasn’t a problem in the first place and have now convinced the consumer that they have a solution for this non-existent dilemma.

They’ve created odor-blocking garbage bags and Glad has gone so far as to make them in vanilla, fresh lemon and fresh clean scents because consumers need an “olfactory cue” in order to trust that the odor-fighting bag is actually working.

If you're thinking, "doesn't Leona have anything else to write about?" think again. The WSJ devoted over a half a page to smelly garbage.

After I read the article, I had to say to myself, "is this really a problem?" Apparently it is. According to Glad's 2008 survey, 60% of people believe if they can smell the trash, the house is not clean. Well then, why wait until the trash starts to smell? Why not just throw it out? Where's the problem?

On the same page, the WSJ reported on garbage cans, the size of furniture, which open and close using infrared sensors costing upwards of \$250! If you're going to use such a huge can and not fill it up for 2-3 days, of course your garbage is going to stink. Easy solution. Use a smaller trash can. I use biodegradable 3 gallon trash bags in our trash can and our garbage never smells.

People mentioned in the article say they freeze their garbage before throwing it away. One such person said, "it's better than putting smelly things like fish or meat in the trash to sit for days." Well, why is it sitting for days? I don't get it. How difficult is it to walk to wherever the garbage bins are and throw out the garbage?

I'm all for innovation, research and development. If someone comes up with a product that can make my life easier, I'm all for it. But is smelly garbage really a problem that needs solving? Take the damn trash out! What's the big deal?

The "odor-cutting technology" is designed in part to persuade consumers to keep spending and pay more for the bags. I guess that's also the American way. Convince people there's a problem and offer them a solution which costs far more than common sense.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.