Topic: Freegans

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: By the end of my speech, my audience should be able to: (a) define freeganism; (b) describe their philosophy and some interesting facts that inspired their movement; (c) identify the opposition they encounter, and (d) list their strategies for practical living.

Introduction

I. Attention Getting Device: Here is a clip from the National Geographic show called Taboo in an episode called “Misfits”.

   A. After seeing this segment, would any of you consider doing the same thing?
   B. Have you ever thought about people who do this sort of thing?

II. Thesis: Freeganism is an alternative way of living to capitalism that proposes to help relieve the environment, reduce world hunger, and work toward eliminating animal cruelty.

III. Preview: To help us understand why this movement is becoming more significant, there are some key points that we should talk about.

   A. What is freeganism?
   B. What is their philosophy and what motivates them to do what they do?
   C. What are some opposition that the freegans encounter?
   D. What are some of their strategies for practical living?

Transition: To help clarify the topic, first, we should define the term freeganism.

Body

I. What is freeganism?

   A. According to the article, “Six Big Ways to Work for a Smaller world,” retrieved June 16, 2011, the term is a combination of the word free and vegan, but not all of them are vegans.
   B. In Penny Crossman’s article, “Banking Among Friends,” freegans want to live simply and maintain a small carbon footprint.
   C. According to the site, freegan.info, retrieved on June 16, 2011, created by Adam Weissman—a freegan for at least ten years—freegans “are people who employ alternative strategies for living based on limited participation in the conventional economy and minimal consumption of resources.”
D. In Crosman’s article cited earlier, freegans have at least one college degree and most come from the middle class.

E. In Jan Goodwin’s article, “She Lives of What We Throw Away,” retrieved on June 16, 2011, freegans think of themselves as “urban foragers” and they’re neither homeless nor destitute.

F. According to the article, “The Year 2006 in Review,” retrieved on June 16, 2011, this movement was born of the extreme environmentalist and antiglobalization movements started in the mid nineties in Seattle and Portland.

**Transition:** Now that we have a definition of freeganism, we should talk about their philosophy and some interesting facts that motivated the creation of the movement.

II. So what is the freegan philosophy and some interesting facts about their lifestyle?

A. According to the article, “Six Big Ways to Work for a Smaller World,” retrieved on June 16, 2011, “Freegans embrace community, generosity, social concern, freedom, cooperation and sharing in opposition to a society based on materialism, moral apathy, competition, conformity and greed”.

B. They’re radical environmentalists against capitalism who take the expression “Waste not, want not” to an extreme level; they eat out of dumpsters, but also donate food to homeless shelters and food banks, as stated in the previously cited article, “She lives off what we throw away.”

C. According to Kathryn Hulick’s article, “Trash Treats,” retrieved on June 16, 2011, “they believe that in a complex, industrial, mass-production economy driven by profit, abuses to humans, animals and the earth abound at all levels of production… in just about every product we buy.”

D. Instead of buying their food, they get it from dumpsters; there are even “Dumpster Directories” on the web site freegan.info, that states the location of the best places to look for food.

E. With the money they save by salvaging in dumpsters and living in old buildings, they can afford not to work full time, so they can support movements of social change, as stated by Kathryn Hulick’s article.

F. They get their food from dumpsters because:

1. “Americans dump 38 million tons of food annually,” according to the Environmental Protection Agency.
2. The date that appears on food labels is not the expiration date, but it refers to its peak flavor as stated in Goodwin’s previously cited article.

**Transition:** Even though freegans have noble intentions, like every other radical movement they’re going to find opposition.

III. So what kinds of opposition do the freegans tend to get?

A. Jerry Adler states in his article, “The Noble Scavenger in the Living- Room Couch,” retrieved on June 16, 2011, that the hunger problem around the world needs to be solved, but he argues that the solution “is not… counseling people to drop off the economy altogether”.


B. Adler also argues that “Freegans, most of who are educated and capable of contributing to the economy aren’t sharing the surplus wealth of the West with those who are destitute by circumstance rather than choice; they’re competing with them for it.”

C. According to Ken Carlson’s article, “Modesto Considering Stricter Rules for the Homeless,” published in the Modesto Bee on June 13, 2011, dumpster diving is illegal in Modesto, just like other regions around the United States.

Transition: Now that we know the arguments against freeganism, we should hear from them what they have to say about their strategies for practical living.

IV. Some of the freegan’s strategies for practical living as stated on the freeganinfo website are:

A. Waste reclamation: The economic system is dominated by companies that only care about their profits and encouraging consumers to discard their products and replace them with new ones to increase their sales.

B. Waste minimization: Freegans recycle and compost organic matter and repair instead of replacing items whenever possible.

C. Eco-friendly transportation: They chose not to use cars for the most part, but instead they chose to bike, skate, hitchhike, and train-hop.

D. Rent-free housing: They believe housing is a right, not a privilege; they occupy and rehabilitate abandoned buildings.

E. Going green: If they need to buy something, they chose to support local, sustainable producers, instead of buying over-processed items.

F. Working less: They decide to contribute less to the capitalist system, that according to them, is source of cruelty, destruction and waste.

Transition: Now that we know the principles of freeganism and what they think about the economic system, we can make more sense of their practices.

Conclusion

I. Summary: We are more informed about the freegan’s movement.

A. We know who Freegans are.
B. We know their philosophy.
C. We know the opposition they encounter.
D. We know their proposed strategies for practical living.

II. Closing: Now that we have learned more about freeganism and what motivated these people to adopt such radical measures, we are aware of the ridiculously high amounts of food wasted in the Western society.

A. Maybe next time we are about to discard anything we would think about it.
B. And maybe we might think of joining the freegan movement.
Works Cited


