

STREET

ISSUE IV



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The Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development
240 Hall Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205

A Tenant Council Story

MARGARET DANBROT

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Every once in a while you hear about something *good* happening . . . the kind of thing that makes you feel that maybe, just maybe, we can work it out after all, if only we can just get in there and really *talk* to each other. And really listen.

That kind of thing happened at 580 Empire Boulevard. It is an oldish, six story building erected some forty-odd years ago. From the outside, it looks pretty much like a lot of other vintage apartment buildings in Crown Heights. And like most of those other buildings, 580 Empire Boulevard has changed.

There was [a] time, for example, when the people who lived there would get up in the morning and never give a thought to whether or not there'd be hot water for a shower. When, if a window was broken, someone would be around to replace it within a day (two at most). Or, when a water-damaged ceiling never got to the point where plaster crumbled down in fist-sized chunks.

But as the neighborhood changed, so did the maintenance at 580. If you lived there a couple of years ago when things were at their worst, you got so you kind of *expected* the boiler to break down now and then, so you heated water on the stove when you wanted to wash and every once in a while, you'd sleep in your coat. If a lighting fixture suddenly stopped working, well, you either learned to live with it, or you learned to fix it yourself. Same with your toilet. And your broken windows. If you were lucky enough to get a paint job, you'd find, in the process of scrubbing your kids' fingerprints off the walls, that you were also scrubbing off your new (cheap, sub-standard) paint.

In short, 580 had become your average, run-of-the-mill, run-down, poorly managed, nothing-works-right, neglected building. The kind many of us—maybe even most of us—find ourselves living in. And we feel helpless. And we don't know what to do about it.

James Brown, an officer of the Tenant Council at 580, says: "Obviously, under those circumstances, there were many of us in the building who were discontented. Some of us, the newer people, were not accustomed to living that way. We had never lived that way before. There were others who'd tried for years to get things done . . . general repairs, things like that . . . and nothing happened. It got to the point where we felt we had to force a confrontation of some kind. As lease-holding, rent-paying tenants we were fulfilling our contractual obligation to the landlord. He wasn't fulfilling his to us."

"So, in June of 1970, the Tenant Council decided it was time to aim the gun," Brown says. "We didn't know whether we'd actually have to pull the trigger . . . call a rent strike, bring the landlord to court, whatever. But we were prepared to go all the way. We got together with Mr. Bess (head of a tenant council

at another Empire Blvd. building) and Mrs. Oestricher (head of a Kingston Avenue Tenant Council) and decided, at a meeting held in our lobby, on a course of action. We were put in touch with State Assemblyman Stanley Steingut's office. Steingut was instrumental in sending out a team of inspectors from the Department of Building's Gold Street Headquarters." (Prior to this, the Tenant Council had arranged for a building inspection through the Department's Willoughby Street district office, but nothing came of that previous inspection.) "This time there were 20 inspectors in all. They recorded pages and pages of violations per apartment. From that point on things began to happen."

"But it wasn't just the violations we were concerned about. Mr. Drayton (president of the 580 Tenant Council) and I and other members of the Council felt that one of the big problems here was that there was no dialogue between us and the landlord. He was sitting in his office collecting his rent and we were living in his building and he didn't know who we were and we didn't know who he was. We felt it was necessary to meet with him and tell him what was happening in the building. Our building."

Arrangements were made, again through Stanley Steingut's office, to meet with the landlord's representative, Joseph Berger, at Buildings Commissioner Altman's office. Drayton and Brown presented a letter indicating that the tenants of 580 had authorized them to represent them in order to bring about some kind of agreement with the landlord. Attached to the letter was a list of 17 grievances.

The atmosphere was tense at that first meeting, according to Brown. "Berger came into the office and sat there reading his New York Times. He was obviously prepared to dismiss the whole thing as a waste of time. There was a lot of hostility in the air, but he finally recognized that we were acting as a concerned body, not just some loosely organized transient group, and that he was going to have to deal with us one way or another."

Many of the grievances presented at that first meeting, Brown says, stemmed from a lack of fulltime superintendent services in the building. "At that time, the superintendent had an outside job so he wasn't around a lot of the time when we needed him. When he was around, he was too tired to do much of anything. We offered him a raise in pay if he would quit his job and stay on the premises full time. He refused, and the Tenant Council put him on notice. Fired him. Then we interviewed and hired a new superintendent and gave him an apartment in the building. As a result of that first meeting with the landlord, the Tenant Council was delegated power of that nature . . . power to hire and fire all building

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WILLIAMSBURG GARBAGE REBELLION REVISITED

Six months ago, residents of Williamsburg clashed with police and piled burning garbage in the streets to protest poor sanitation service. Yesterday, community workers gave the Sanitation Department a mixed report card on its follow up of promises to improve service in the area.

"The situation is back to normal. There has been no appreciable change in garbage collection," said a spokesman for the Williamsburg Community Corporation, an anti-poverty agency.

However, another community worker, Luis Scese of the Southside Mission, said that garbage collection services "have been good" since the June outburst in the 200 block of South Second Street that netted seven arrests of Williamsburg residents who were charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

The Williamsburg Community Corporation spokesman noted that two weeks after the outburst garbage collection improved markedly. But six months later the abandoned cars, litter and unswept streets that sparked the "riot" were back, the spokesman said.

But according to a spokesman for the department's Brooklyn Bureau of Cleaning and Collection, garbage is collected every day in the Williamsburg area.

"We may be a little off now because of the holidays," said the spokesman, "but since last June we have picked up garbage in that section every day."

While declining comment on the Sanitation Department's claim of collecting garbage every day in the area, Luis Scese of Southside Mission agreed that services have improved. The main problem still remaining, Scese said, is the failure of building superintendents to properly cover garbage containers.

For further information contact:

Scese, 388-1182

Nedda Allbray, Williamsburg Corp., 782-2901

Brooklyn Bureau of Cleaning and Collection, 387-5426

Credit: Community News Service (CNS 04), December 29, 1971

Corrections

The October, November, December 1971 edition of STREET should have read Issues I, II, III instead of Volumes I, II, III.

The "Food Stamp Program" article (in the previous edition of STREET), did not receive proper credit. It should have read "Reprinted by permission from Vol. 1, No. 3, November, 1971 of Urban Rights, a publication of the New York Urban Coalition. Our apologies.



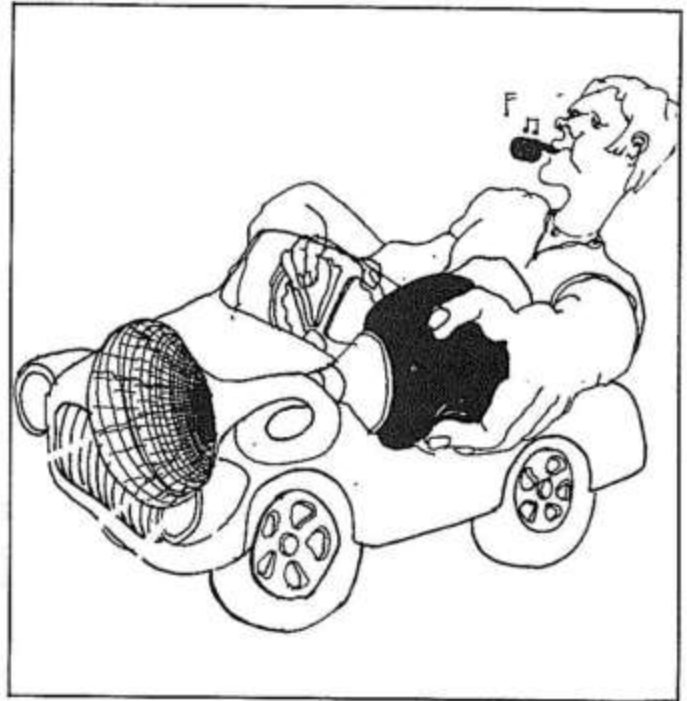
New Year's Resolutions

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It's 1972—once again time for New Year's resolutions. The STREET collaborative has come up with some resolutions we hope you'll put on your list so we may all do our share towards restoring the balance between the natural and man-made environment. You know the problems—here are some ways to help.

WATER

- Turn faucets *all* the way off when they're not in use. If they leak (wasting up to 25 gallons a day) repair them by replacing the plastic or rubber washers without calling in an expensive plumber.
- Washing dishes in running water can waste up to 30 gallons.
- Use detergents sparingly.
- Brief showers, instead of baths, can save up to 20 gallons of water.
- Two bricks can be placed in the flush tank of your toilet to save about one quart of water per flush. This doesn't reduce efficiency.
- Keep a bottle of water in the refrigerator for drinking. While waiting for running to get hot, use it for other purposes such as brushing teeth or washing hands.



NOISE

- Use earplugs on portable radios and tape recorders in public places.
- Turn off the T.V., radio, stereo, etc. when you're not listening.
- Keep cool in traffic jams—don't lean on your horn.
- Influence your children not to partake in noise-making activities that invade the privacy of others.
- Think twice about the appliance you buy and insist that the manufacturer install muffling devices in them. The extra cost is almost negligible.
- Turn off power tools after 10 P.M.
- Make sure your car muffler is doing its job.

SYNTHETIC CHEMICALS

- Avoid all chlorinated hydrocarbons (such as DDT) and other persistent pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides.
- Demand and use less toxic cleaning agents, gasolines, food additives, paints and plastics.
- Burn incense, grow pots of sweet smelling herbs, put bunches of lavender or clove-studded oranges in your closets—but don't use poisonous air freshener sprays. These only cover up odors.
- Use baking soda for a cleanser. Alone or combined with salt it makes a good tooth powder which is cheap and recommended by the American Dental Association. Millions of pounds of unrecyclable tooth paste tubes are thrown away each year.

FOODS

- Read *all* labels carefully. Don't buy anything with contents you can't pronounce or have doubts about.

- Avoid foods with artificial colors or bakery products made with bleached flour, dehydrated and other convenience foods such as boxed mashed potatoes, dry packaged soups, imitation beef stroganoff, packaged snacks or cereals, imitation foods (imitation orange juice), or non-dairy creamers.
- Avoid foods with hydrogenated vegetable oils.
- Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, organically grown if possible.
- Use leftovers in casseroles, soups, and salads. More creativity means less waste and money saved. Besides, homemade soup is delicious.
- Buy in quantity to reduce packaging waste. If you have pets, buy dry food in bulk quantities.
- Use natural honey instead of sugar.
- Bake your own bread.
- Grow your own herbs and spices.
- Learn all you can about nutrition—you'll become healthier, wealthier, and wiser.



TRANSPORTATION

- Walk, ride a bike, or jog whenever possible. This will improve your health and spirits.
- Use public transportation whenever possible. Think of all the parking and traffic jam hassles you're avoiding.
- Buy a lower horsepower car. Keep it well-tuned and in top condition. Use low or unleaded gas.
- Drive at moderate speeds.
- Use car pools whenever possible.
- Combine errands—one trip is better than three. Take a neighbor along for company.
- Car airconditioners increase fuel consumption.
- Don't idle your engine for long periods.

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

- Turn off lights when they're not in use.
- Use low wattage light bulbs (40-60 watts). For close work and reading use 100-150 watt bulbs.
- Reostat controls can be installed for overhead fixtures to dim the lights when much illumination isn't needed.
- Candles can be used in the evening.
- Work near windows or outside during the day. Do work which requires strong light (sewing, reading, paperwork, etc.) by day if possible.
- Depend less (or not at all) on electric blankets, knives, tooth brushes, pencil sharpeners, can openers, etc. The old-fashioned hand operated kinds work just as well.

LITTER

- Set a good example for others by picking up bits of litter yourself.
- Save aluminum, tin, bi-metals, and glass for recycling.
- Reuse polyethylene bags and other plastic containers. Return non-reusable plastic to the manufacturer or distributor.
- Don't buy over-packaged goods. If you really need them, leave the extra cardboard and plastic in the store and let *them* dispose of it. Someone will eventually get the hint.
- Carry your own shopping bag and refuse the store's bag.
- Buy fewer cans, bottles, and plastics.
- Reuse containers instead of plastic wrap or foil.
- Save your jars for storing staples like flour, raw sugar, dry beans, grains, etc. or reuse them for homemade jams and fruits.
- **CURB YOUR DOG**

PAPER

- Save newspapers and magazines for recycling.
- If you must use paper towels instead of cloth ones, dry your wet ones for reuse. Use sponges, dishtowels, and rags in the kitchen.
- Try to use cloth napkins.
- Use both sides of a sheet of paper.
- Keep a scrap paper drawer and cut up paper bags for jotting notes.
- Reuse envelopes by pasting labels over former addresses.
- Make your own envelopes out of paper used on one side, or by folding a letter into its own envelope.
- Save all wrapping paper from presents, cards, tissue paper, etc. and recycle with imagination. In fact, save this year's holiday greeting cards and make next years from them—or use them to tag presents.
- Complain to the post office about any mail advertisements you receive that are ecologically obscene. The post office will have you taken off the mailing list. This will cost the mailer more than sending you the material.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

ODDS AND ENDS

- Use your hands—learn to crochet, knit, sew, work leather, make jewelry, macramé, etc.
- Old clothing can be cut into strips for making braided rugs or donated to charity.
- If you can knit and/or crochet you can supply yourself with clothes and give much appreciated handmade gifts. It's not hard to find a market for handmade items.
- You can make your own tree ornaments next year from popcorn balls, gingerbread men, strings of nuts and berries, and some of those cards and ribbons you've been saving.
- Take up yoga. It will do wonders for your body and mind. Classes are inexpensive and listed in the yellow pages. Many local YWCA's and YMCA's also offer yoga classes.
- Remember—furs look better on their original owners.



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A TENANT COUNCIL STORY

personnel, including the superintendent, porter, plumbers, painters and other contractors. In effect, we manage the building now. We even rent the apartments as they are vacated. We also decide what kinds of changes will take place in the physical appearance of the building—for example, what color paint will be used in the lobby. This is all a part of our philosophy. We're concerned with the actual appearance of the building as well as maintenance, safety, cleanliness. We don't think of this place as just a building, we think of it as our home."

"I think maybe he (the landlord) cooperated at first because he felt we had the legal expertise of Steingut's office at our disposal," Brown says, "and nobody knows for sure what might have happened, what kind of judge we'd have, if we'd taken this thing to court. But as it worked out, at this point there is a feeling of mutual respect between the Tenant Council and the landlord. This is the factor that accounts for the progress we've made. We could have taken him to court, but we chose to have this series of meetings with him. And he chose to cooperate. Otherwise we wouldn't have gotten so far so fast. This is an ongoing thing. We meet with him now every other Saturday, and we deal with the problems as they arise. Running a tenant council this way, running the building ourselves, is drudgery. But as a result, we feel we have one of the best buildings in the neighborhood. Maybe the best."

"This is not really a success story," Brown continues. "We still have our problems around here. Of the 17 grievances originally submitted to the landlord, only 14 were agreed to at the time. And of the 14 agreed to, only eleven were complied with. The two major issues still left unresolved are the fire escapes—they must be put back into perfect working order—and the elevator. We want a new one, not a refurbished one. But we're hoping to get the elevator project started before Christmas."

"We don't want anybody to get the wrong impression about what's happened here. We feel we fought hard for whatever we got, and we had some good people working with us—Bess, Oestricher. Steingut's office was helpful. I honestly don't know whether Steingut's office is prepared to offer this kind of help to other tenant groups, though I got the impression it was. But nothing would have happened here had there not been enough men and women who were concerned. And on the other hand, nothing would have happened either if it hadn't been for a landlord who decided to, shall we say, intersperse good public relations with good business. It might be easier for other tenant groups to achieve what we did; or it might be a lot harder. But that's no reason why other tenants shouldn't organize."

Margaret Danbrot, the writer of this article, has been a staff writer for national magazines and is a free-lance journalist and fiction writer. Mrs. Danbrot, her husband and daughter are citizens of Crown Heights.

Reprinted courtesy of *The Melting Pot*, Crown Heights Newspaper, Vol. IV, No. 1, January 1972.



ROSY RED DOGS

The Department of Agriculture has proposed the use of yet another coloring agent in that old American institution, the hot dog—already largely a product of the chemist's test tube.

The additive—sodium acid pyrophosphate (SAP)—is going to help speed the development of a rosy red color. SAP will be one more of many other additives all of which are now used to make the frank a palatable red instead of the "unappetizing grey" they turn during processing.

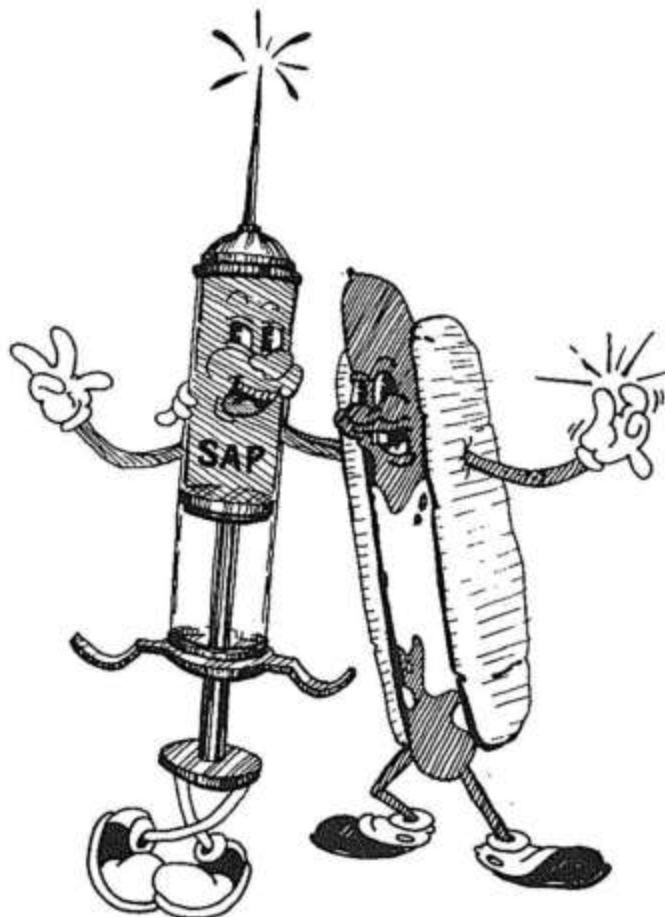
Theoretically, SAP would mean a 25-40 percent reduction in the time required to make a hot dog which in turn would reduce the cost per unit. This saving may or may not be passed on to the consumer.

According to *The New York Times*, Nov. 2, 1971, the current department general "recipe" for franks includes meat and meat byproducts (beef, lamb, pork or goat meat), up to 30 percent fat, ten percent water, 15 percent poultry meat, two percent corn syrup, and 3.5 percent cereals and nonfat dry milk (these last two ingredients must be stated on the label if used), plus spices and flavorings. This means that up to 60.5 percent of the hot dog contains something other than meat or meat byproducts.

"All Meat" frankfurters don't contain any poultry products and "all beef" ones contain only beef as their *meat* ingredient.

Consumer advocate Ralph Nader has claimed he will "never eat another hot dog, ever," and called the frankfurter "the classic consumer fraud. If everyone saw what went into them, sales would plummet by 85 percent," Mr. Nader said. (*The New York Times*, Nov. 2, 1971).

Still, some 15 billion frankfurters are consumed in this country each year.



For specifics on chemicals in foods and where to complain contact:

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Food Control
93 Worth Street
New York, New York 10013
488-4820

U.S. Department of Agriculture Consumer Protection
26 Federal Plaza
New York, New York
264-1390
(Meat and Poultry only)

The Department of Consumer Affairs
80 Lafayette Street
New York, New York
964-7777

Organizations Working in the Field:
Scientist's Institute For Public Information
30 East 68th Street
New York, New York
249-3200

DEATH SPRAYS

One of the more deadly crazes on the drug scene is aerosol sniffing, a relatively recent drug abuse problem among children. Physicians, government officials, drug experts, and chemical manufacturers are growing increasingly worried about the inhalation of aerosol sprays.

These products—about 300 different types of hair sprays, deodorants, household cleaners, etc., now on the market—can all be abused. Users spray them into paper bags, plastic bags or balloons and inhale them. The propellants, usually hydrocarbons or fluorocarbons can also cause death, usually from cardiac arrest.

Concern about aerosol misuse has already result in two conferences in Washington. To combat the problem the industry has begun an educational campaign warning youths about aerosol sniffing. The



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Phosphates or No Phosphates

The question still seems to be with us after the recent announcements by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency concerning detergents. The E.P.A. has now advocated a return to low phosphate detergents since many of the non-phosphate ones contain caustic soda.

Caustic soda (sodium hydroxide), is not the same as washing soda (sodium carbonate), but both are often used in washing preparations to break down dirt and soften water. Large amounts of caustic soda have been known to cause skin and eye irritations.

The Federal Government's present position is that because of this possible irritation and the fact that large amounts of caustic soda can be harmful if swallowed, there should be a mass return to phosphate detergents. However, no mention was made in the releases on this subject of the toxicity of phosphate detergents which can also be very harmful if swallowed.

The detrimental environmental effects of phosphates in streams and waterways, while admitted by E.P.A. officials, were almost completely ignored. Furthermore, the presence of many other poisonous cleaning compounds on the market was not mentioned at all. Naturally, the careful consumer should exercise caution with all these products, especially around young children.

In view of this odd, selective reasoning exhibited by national environmental and health authorities, many people now active in the fight for cleaner waters feel that a complete surrender was made to the powerful soap and detergent lobby. This lobby has

been vigorously fighting the steps being taken to reduce or ban the use of phosphates in detergents and, for the moment, they are claiming a great victory.

The most damaging stand however, is that of the E.P.A. itself by its advocacy of the use of compounds which have **definitely been proven** detrimental to the environment. This undermines the confidence of citizens toward such a "protective" agency as well as causing endless confusion on the subject.

There are several alternatives to the use of phosphate detergents. These include the use of no-phosphate detergents with low caustic soda contents if they have proven not to irritate the eyes or skin of family members. Of course, there is always soap, often "beefed up" with washing soda although in New York's soft water very little washing soda is needed. Some people are using yellow laundry soap and many others have changed to Ivory Snow, Ivory Flakes, or Lux Flakes. All of these alternatives contain no phosphates or NTA and are easily biodegradable or water soluble.

Some day sewage systems may be equipped to filter out phosphates from waste water thus permitting us to use "the marvels of modern science" in our wash with a clear conscience. But until then it seems environmentally irresponsible to use a harmful product when so many alternatives exist.

Researched and prepared by the Ecology Committee, Junior League of Brooklyn.

STREET Tips

Be a 'Water Watcher'--Here's How

When you spot a fishkill or an oil slick, follow these guidelines:

1. Call the Department of Environmental Conservation collect at 518-457-7362 or 518-457-7363 and report your findings. This "pollution line" is directly connected to ENCON's Bureau of Water Quality Management. Or notify your

regional office or your local Conservation Officer. He is listed in your local telephone directory under the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

2. Report the fishkill or oil slick immediately. Pollutants are quickly carried away, mixed or diluted. It is important to find

where the toxin is entering the water to prove who is responsible.

3. Be as accurate as possible. The more detailed your observations and directions to the location of the fishkill or spill, the quicker department employees can reach the location.





EAT NATURAL, EAT WELL

By Renée Babel

There's an old adage—I'm not familiar with its origins—that says "you eat to live, not live to eat." In some poorer communities in our nation, mal-nutrition is still very much of a reality. I'm told we live in the most affluent nation in the world. Perhaps we do. I see its wonders and material wealth all around. However, very little of this affluence has passed my way.

Now, getting back to food. I have long ago reached the conclusion that one need not be rich or affluent to afford the luxury of eating properly (these days, people think of it as being a luxury instead of a vital necessity).

Fortunately, I grew up in an environment that stressed two important things—health and education. My mother, a widow, raised four kids on a small salary and social security, so she was forever pinching pennies.

Think of it. How does a woman with three strapping teenage boys keep peace with their palates and their immense, ravenous appetites? Well anyway, she managed. How? She was a health fiend from way back, conscious of the nutritional value of every bit of food she placed before us. Candy and extra spending money were foreign to us because of a tight family budget. Also, unlike many poor people from my ethnic background (Black) she didn't believe in "long pots," i.e. white potatoes, stringbeans, and neck bones stewed together in a pot, mainly because she felt most of these economical dishes lacked in nutritional value and were just plain fattening. She would stress that a fat person wasn't a healthy person. Thus, no long pots or cornbread. She was gung ho when it came to chicken or beef stew (chunks of chuck beef with lots of watercress, celery, carrots, some white potatoes, etc). She felt the more

green leafy vegetables she put in the stew the greater its food value. The stew was light in both texture and inside the intestinal tract. There were also her many kinds of casseroles (chunky tunafish with spinach noodles instead of starchy white ones, eggs, milk, etc.). She also made fish stew (any type of fresh fish with carrots, celery, and spinach in a pot—don't forget to throw in some roe and a couple of heads—fish that is).

The above may sound lavish to some, but it's really not when you think of all the non-nutritional junk people spend so many food dollars on. Leave the cakes and cookies on the grocers' shelves and try making your own with soy flour, honey, and vegetable shortening instead of bleached flour, sugar, and lard. Cakes and cookies cost only pennies to make at home.

Think about the money you throw away on carbonated soda, beer, potato chips, and other "junk foods." Try to eliminate them by buying fresh oranges instead of carbonated drinks. Fresh oranges are cheaper than soda, usually ten for 49-79 cents as compared to soda per can which usually runs about 20 cents. You can make two quarts of orange drink from ten oranges by squeezing them, adding water and raw sugar. Two quarts makes approximately eight glasses or the equivalent of eight cans of soda which would cost \$1.60 as compared to 79 cents. For nuts, substitute dry roasted soy beans, etc.

In concluding, I would just like to say that it doesn't take affluence to eat properly, only knowledge. Much of the time ignorance is the contributing factor to the maladies and problems that usually accompany poverty. If people would apply a little ingenuity, then perhaps they could avoid some of the pitfalls of being poor. Take time. Think of some of the ways you can save food money, and at the same time, eat things that are nutritionally good for you. And most important, eat naturally!

DEATH SPRAYS continued from page 7

industry maintains that aerosol products are safe when used as directed, but members of Congress and public health officials are demanding the aerosol cans carry explicit warnings about inhalation and that a safer substitute for fluorocarbons, the most frequently used propellant, be quickly developed. Several researchers feel a written warning is not sufficient and have suggested the possibility of using the old skull and crossbones symbol.

Over 100 youths have died since 1967 from deliberate aerosol sniffing, with an average of four deaths a month now being recorded. Although there are no nationwide figures on how many youngsters

have experimented with aerosol sniffing, the state Narcotic Control Commission estimates there are about 35,000 solvent and aerosol sniffers in New York State.

Users' ages generally range from 11-15 years. Apparently, death occurs after a user inhales deeply of the spray for a prolonged period, either once or on several occasions. Freon, the best-known brand of fluorocarbon propellants, can make the heart beat irregularly and then stop. Since each body reacts differently to it, not every abuser dies, but those who do suffer an attack do not recover. Once the attack begins it is quick, sudden, and irreversible.



The 1972 Urban Improvements Program of the Parks Council.

This catalogue of improvements, sponsored by The Parks Council in co-operation with the Fund for the City of New York, is designed to encourage and facilitate private financial participation on a tax-deductible basis—by individuals, groups, and the business community—in the tangible improvement of the quality of life in New York City.

Entirely on a non-profit basis, all aspects of the standardized (all under \$5000) and non-standardized projects contained in this catalogue will be under the complete supervision of the Urban Improvements Program. For each improvement, the Program's responsibility includes: pre-clearing all projects with the appropriate City agencies; supervising all aspects of permit application, orders, installation, and maintenance; providing insurance coverage where required at the lowest possible cost (the Program has its own Master Policy); and a total commitment to each project, large or small.

All necessary information concerning each improvement is included within the pages of this catalogue. The Urban Improvements Program charges a 7% administrative service fee to help defray a part of its expenses. There is no sales tax. All expenses are tax-deductible when "improvements" are used for the public benefit.

Many other improvements and programs not included in this catalogue can easily be administered through the Urban Improvements Program, which offers a vital opportunity for individual action in New York City. Please contact the Program Director to discuss any proposed improvement.

Arnold Lehman, Director
Helene Friedman, Assistant Director

Street Furniture.

Did you ever have a deep impassioned yearning for your own trash container in front of your store (substitute whatever you like for the site)? Now we can satisfy this desire!

Did you ever think how nice it would be if there were bus shelters when you forgot your umbrella or it was 2 degrees above zero? What about a kiosk to remind you of your love affair with Paris?

New Yorkers have been deprived too long. We've got a great trash container ready to go—but you have to do the servicing. The Dry Dock Savings Bank has already bought theirs from us. Reinforced fiberglass with clean, elegant lines. Perfect for all kinds of litter and trash. The top slides off for easy servicing of the plastic bag inside. Almost any color you would like. All for under \$80. Be the first on your block.

STEPS: 1. Look at your sidewalk and street. If it's dirty, call us. 2. We'll get the necessary permits and have your own trash container on the street in a couple of weeks.

We'll get you benches too. We have two kinds, both of pre-cast concrete. One is a straight bench, delivered, for under \$100, and the second is a semi-circular bench (great near bus stops) for \$250. Any excavation is extra, of course.

Kiosks and bus shelters are coming. They're being designed for us right now. If your company or group is interested, we're interested in talking to you.





With a minimum of time and effort milk cartons can be turned into storage containers for small hardware—nails, screws, washers, etc.

Wash the cartons thoroughly. Cut them to a height of approximately three inches or more with a sharp knife.

Organize the cut containers on a shelf near your work space or toolbox. They can also be nailed to a piece of wood or homosote, or tacked to a wall. Scraps and small tools fit nicely into them.

Milk Cartons also make excellent holders for pencils, pens, eraser, small paint brushes, matches, and hundreds of other things. Just measure the height needed and cut.

The cartons can be left as they are or can be covered with odd bits of wrapping paper, old greeting cards, magazine or newspaper clippings, etc. For a lasting finish, the covering should be coated with shellac.

With the exception of cutting down the cartons, this would be a good project for children. Cut

containers can also store the many small objects children collect.

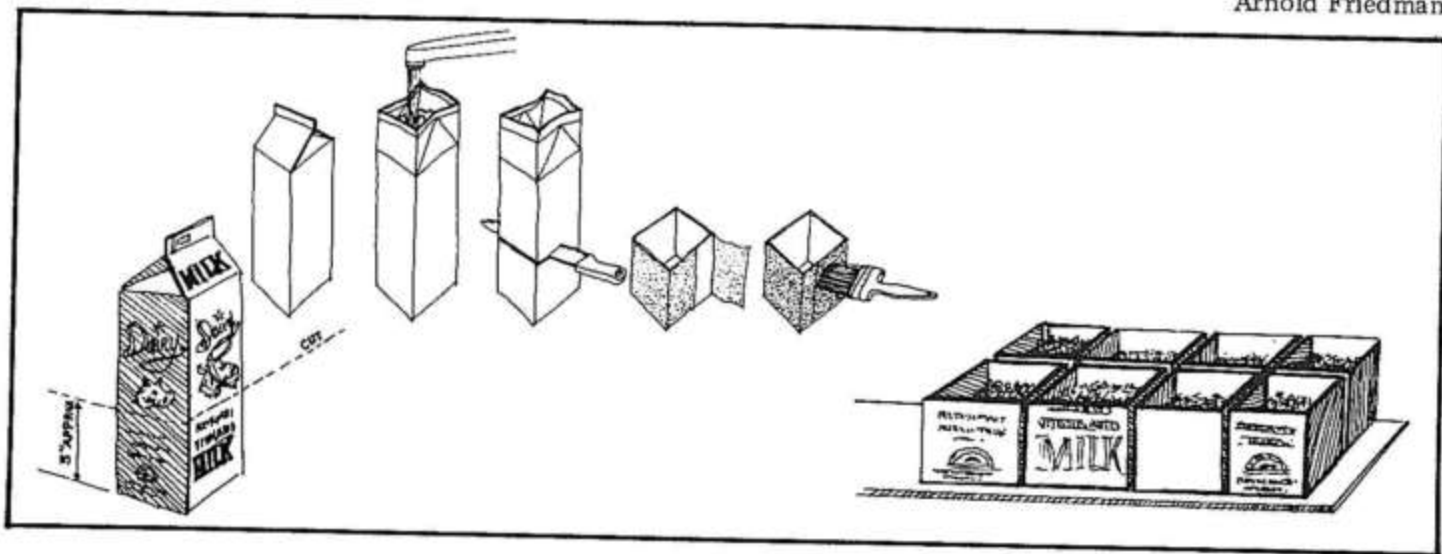
Children might enjoy playing with empty milk cartons this summer in a sand box or at the beach. Wheels from worn out toys can be added to make toy trucks and cars.

Half-gallon cartons (quarts too) are great for freezing block ice cubes for summer picnics, camping chests, etc.

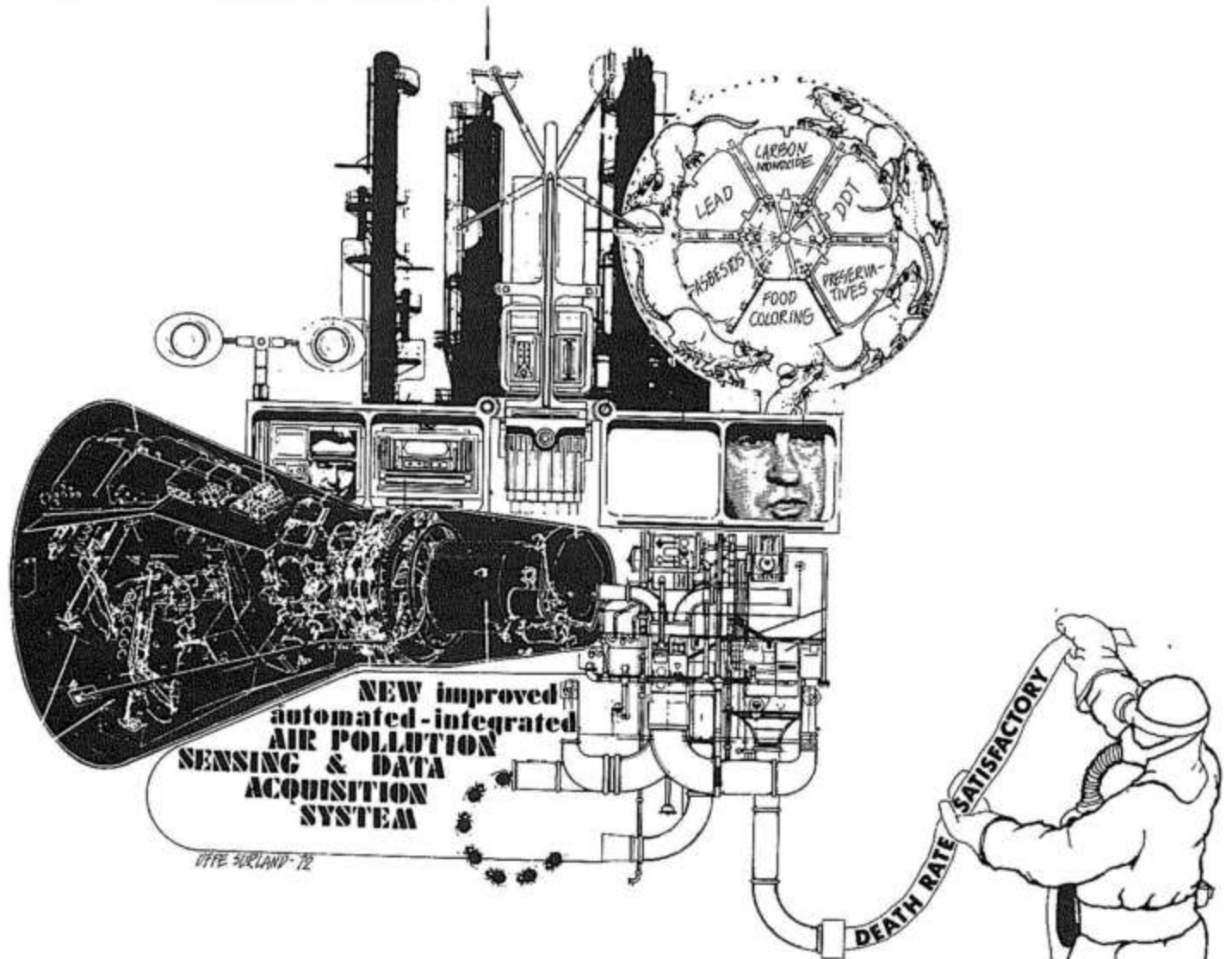
Milk cartons, empty coffee cans, frozen food trays, egg shell halves, egg cartons, plastic ice cube cups or other small containers can be used to start plant seedlings indoors. (We'll give you all the details on this project in the spring).

Empty coffee cans (with plastic covers) can also be used for storing staples—cereals, grains, etc. Use as they are or paint the outsides. A variety of children's toys can be made from them, but be careful of sharp edges. Coffee cans are very useful for household projects. They're great for storage, or cleaning paint brushes in turpentine and for mixing small amounts of paint.

Arnold Friedman



Clearing The Air: Zero Pollution' Now!



By Steven Marcus

Public awareness of air pollution and its adverse effects has increased enormously during the past few years. Governments at all levels have responded with a proliferation of regulations and agencies, and have been assuring the public the problem is being successfully attacked.

Don't believe it.

I am an engineer by profession and have, for several years, been involved in studies on air pollution control. I have concluded that air pollution is harmful at all levels with the effects of acute, episode-level (extremely high) concentrations being immediate and obvious, and the effects of chronic, lower-level concentrations being long-term and subtle.

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Do we continue exposing ourselves to chronic levels of toxic materials until they are proven harmful, or do we behave cautiously by preventing such exposure entirely before great numbers of people become ill or die?

I say the only optimal level of pollution is zero, or as close to zero as possible.

My scientific colleagues do not, in general, agree with me. They pose no goal toward zero pollution. It is generally believed a great deal of pollution is bad, but that below a certain level it is tolerable. That is the whole basis of environmental standard-setting.

Unfortunately, standards are usually set with episode-level concentrations in mind, with little or no allowance for uncertain or unknown long-term effects. In fact, known effects are often overlooked.

We are often told the situation is improving and our institutions will "solve" the problem in due time. Nevertheless, a New York City Air Resources Department Survey for 1970 showed increased particulate concentrations, in virtually every neighborhood, over the levels for 1969.

Nine of the 42 monitoring stations showed increases of 20 percent or more, and almost half showed increases of from 10 to 20 percent.

According to Edward Farrand, director of the Department's Bureau of Technical Services, "Climate and weather were the major factors responsible for this form of pollution."

No! The major causes are unabated emissions from combustion of fuel and trash.

Highly advanced abatement technology for particulate matter has been available for many years. It has recently been estimated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that we can abate 95 percent of all particulate emissions at reasonable cost.

Wouldn't it be wiser to implement this existing technology than to tolerate increased concentrations?

It is claimed, usually by polluters, that air pollution is complex and should be left to the "experts." They say we must study the problem. Thus, public welfare must await the leisurely pace of scientific inquiry. This is a travesty and a perversion of our capabilities.

I do not claim the solution is simple. I do say the approach is simple and obvious: We must address our technological and economic resources toward achieving zero pollution.

Although there is apparently a need for technological expertise in achieving zero pollution, these skills are currently used to complicate and compartmentalize the problem.

There is virtually a tyranny of experts—researchers more interested in working out the tools of their own fields than in confronting the totality of the problem. Economists, chemists, physicists, toxicologists,

epidemiologists, engineers, meteorologists, and a host of other professionals are having field days. Such activity gives the impression the problem is being attacked.

Unfortunately, since the approach is so complicated and noncommittal, it can never accomplish more than a cosmetic improvement.

A notable example of such technological masturbation is the New York City "Aerometric Network." A reprint from the journal *Air Engineering*, distributed by the Department of Air Resources, tells us this is an "automated, integrated air pollution sensing and data acquisition system, claimed to be the most advanced in the country." For a mere \$500,000 (initial cost), New York gets "a computer-controlled recording station, ten automatic remote data acquisition facilities located at strategic sites throughout the city, and peripheral equipment for manual control, printout and data analysis of critical air pollution parameters."

Mayor Lindsay, in inaugurating the system, had this to say: "... there will be, for the first time anywhere in the nation, a scientific profile of the quality of air in virtually every neighborhood."

Never mind "scientific profiles." We do not need to measure, especially with such space-age extravagance, New York's heavily polluted air. We should devote our energies toward making sure that the pollutants never get there.

A goal of zero pollution would cut through all the labyrinthine approaches and place our technological capabilities where they can deliver.

We can, and must, make creative applications of existing tools, as well as develop what is additionally needed. An imaginative society, in which technology responds to people rather than vice-versa, could use the following, either singly or in combination: recycling technology, process changes in manufacturing and consumption, changes in inputs (i.e., fuel substitutions), treatment of effluents, elimination of offending processes with their resources reallocated.

Some changes will have to be made in economic and governmental institutions in order to make beneficial use of these alternatives. That must be expected, because the nature of the environmental crisis is a product of the fundamental values and structures of our society.

We will have a decent, human environment only when our institutions are explicitly designed for that purpose.

Dr. Marcus received his Ph.D. from Harvard University and is currently a research fellow in the Environmental Systems Program there. His opinions are not intended to represent those of his colleagues in the Program.

SICKLE CELL ANEMIA

What Is It

Sickle Cell Disease, commonly called Sickle Cell Anemia, is an incurable blood disorder that can be very painful and sometimes cause death. It is a disease which is passed on from parents to children (inherited), in either a mild or severe form. Nearly half of the people who have the severe form die by age 20, and few live beyond 40 years of age.

The disease is not contagious, meaning it cannot be "caught" from someone—it has to be inherited. Anyone whose ancestors came from Africa or the countries along the Mediterranean Sea may carry the Sickle Cell trait or mild form. About 1 out of every 10 Black Americans, and about 1 out of 20 Puerto Ricans, have the trait.

What Causes the Disease

It is believed that Sickle Cell Anemia is the result of a blood condition caused by the body's effort to build up its resistance against malaria. Although there is little chance of catching malaria in the United States, the Sickle Cell trait is still passed on from parents to children.

Symptoms of Sickle Cell

In the severe form, the disease causes the red blood cells to change from a normal round shape into a sickle, or half-moon shape. This is how the disease got its name. These blood cells break easily, and the body has trouble replacing them thereby causing anemia, or shortage of red blood cells. In addition, these abnormal cells may block up blood vessels so that parts of the body don't get enough oxygen, causing what is known as a "crisis."

Why You Should Be Tested

Some people carry the trait, but may never become ill from the disease themselves. They are able to live normal lives, but should avoid places with a low oxygen level in the air, such as high mountains or unpressurized planes or extreme exertion. Although they may sometimes pass blood in their urine or get infections easily, their main problem is the chance of passing on the trait to their children. When only one parent has the trait, or is a "carrier" of the disease, the children may also inherit only the trait. But if two people who have the trait marry, the chances are 1 in 4 that each child will inherit the severe form of the disease.

The Severe Form

Sickle Cell disease can be confused with many other conditions, such as rheumatic fever or arthritis, because of the similarity in symptoms.

The severe form of the disease occurs when a child receives a "double dose"—one trait from each parent. Infants, 6 to 12 months of age, with this form, may be pale, have puffy hands and feet, and may be very irritable. School age children are usually pale, weak, small in size, tire easily, often run a fever, and are bed wetters. They may also have sores on their legs which do not heal well, and get frequent infections.

In "crisis" periods, the child becomes extremely listless and complains of pain in the back, arms and legs, or stomach. The whites of his eyes may become slightly yellow. Most of these attacks cause a week or two of absence from school, and sometimes the child even has to be hospitalized and receive blood transfusions. In many cases, between crisis periods, he tires very easily and cannot play for very long. This continued tiredness, as well as the absences caused by crises, cause difficulty with school work.

Sickle Cell Disease in Pregnancy

A woman with the severe form is likely to have trouble during her pregnancy or delivery and may pass the disease on to her child. If she is only a carrier of the trait, there are certain measures which need to be taken during delivery, although she should not have any special problems during pregnancy.

The Sickle Cell Test and Treatment

Sickle cell disease can be diagnosed by a quick blood test, done by a simple prick of the finger. Treatment can be given to help ease the pain and to prevent the complications which occur as a result of the body's low resistance to infection although there is no known cure at present. It is also important that persons who are carriers of the disease receive counseling before they marry or have children.

A free blood test for Sickle Cell Disease can be obtained at:

Jamaica Hospital
89th Avenue &
Van Wyck Expressway
Jamaica, N.Y.
Telephone: 526-7500
Wednesdays 9:00 to 12:00 noon

St. Luke's Hospital Center
421 West 113th Street
New York, N.Y.
Telephone: 870-6000
Wednesdays 11:30-12:00
—screening
Wednesdays 1:00-2:30 pm
—Hematology Clinic

Lincoln Hospital
Section 8
320 Concord Ave. (bet. Jackson Ave. and Southern Blvd.)
Bronx, N.Y.
Thursdays 9:00 to 12:00 noon
Call first for appointment at 960-5619
(Hematology Clinic)

Morrisania Hospital
Walton Avenue & 168th St.
Bronx, N.Y.
Telephone: 960-2151
Tuesday mornings (Hematology Clinic)

Kings County Hospital
451 Clarkson Avenue
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Telephone: 462-4000
Pediatric testing: Mon to Fri, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, at Children's Emergency
Adult testing: Same as above, at Out-patient Dept. building, screening desk.
Clinics: by appointment after testing

Cumberland Hospital
39 Auburn Place
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Telephone: MA 5-1880
Tuesdays 2:00 pm

Knickerbocker Hospital
70 Convent Avenue at 131st St.
New York, N.Y.
Tuesdays at 12:30

Sydenham Hospital
Manhattan Avenue & 123rd St.
New York, N.Y.
Telephone: 666-8000
Age 1-18 Wednesdays 1:00 pm
Age 18 up Mon & Fri (General Clinic)

Bellevue Hospital
26th Street and First Ave.
New York, N.Y.
(4th floor, Clinic Building)
Tuesdays at 1:30
(Hematology Clinic)

Van Ettan Hospital
(Bronx Municipal Hospital Center)
Morris Park Ave. & Eastchester Eastchester Road
Bronx, N.Y.
Mondays 9:00 am all day
Call first for appointment at 430-2187
(Heredity Clinic)

For more information about Sickle Cell disease contact:
Foundation for Research & Education in Sickle Cell Disease
421-423 West 120th Street
New York, N.Y. 10027
Telephone: 222-8500

The Mayor of Civitavecchia, Italy (population 40,000), was imprisoned for 30 hours charged with being responsible for the dangerous deterioration of the country's environment. In this case—the deterioration of the broad off-shore stretch of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

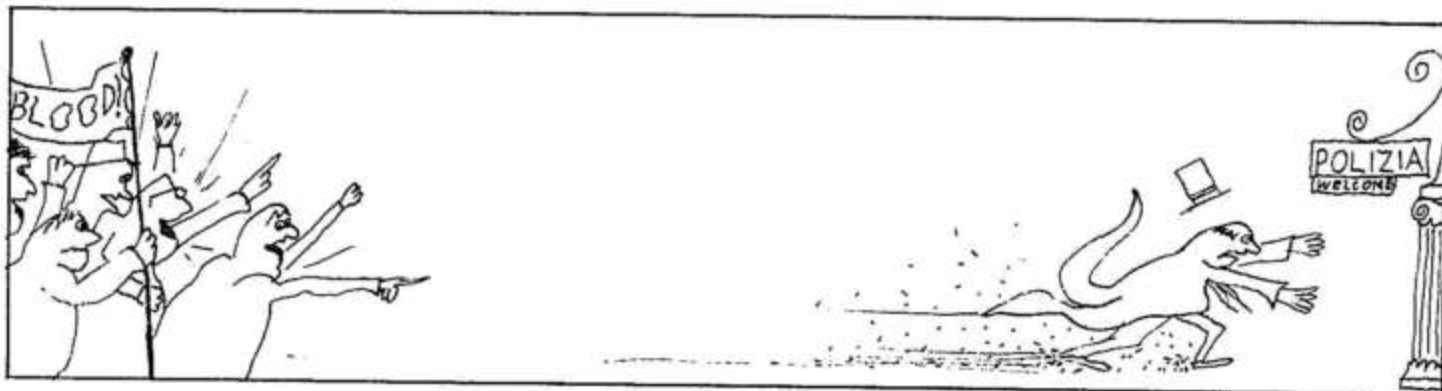
Medical authorities ordered the city's beaches closed to bathers last summer when the water was found to be heavily contaminated by sewage and untreated industrial wastes. Recently, a committee of experts submitted a report showing that the city's water quality had grown even worse.

A magistrate opened an inquiry into possible criminal aspects of pollution and during the year he repeatedly urged City Hall to act to control the effluents going into the sea, but to no avail. The upshot of the situation was the Mayor's arrest and the exposure of what many saw as bureaucratic indifferences to public health emergencies. Formal charges were made against the Mayor for "continual damage to a public asset, violation of fishery laws, and failure to carry out official duties." (*The New York Times*, Dec. 3, 1971). The Mayor can theoretically be sentenced to nine years imprisonment if found guilty on all charges Leaded fuel faces a ban in California. Orange County supervisors have ordered the phasing out of virtually all leaded gasolines—premium and regular—sold in the county by 1975. Violation of the lead limits will be a misdemeanor, providing for fines of up to \$2,500 for each occurrence and allowing the county to seek an injunction against dealers who sell gas containing more lead than the limits allow In what is believed to be the first such court ruling in the U.S. a judge has upheld a ban on nonreturnable bottles and cans in Bowie, Maryland's third largest incorporated city. Although the ordinance prohibiting nonreturnable bottles and cans was passed in the city last March, it has been held in abeyance during court proceedings resulting from a suit filed by Seven-Up, Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola bottlers, Grand Union supermarkets, and local liquor retailers.

The plaintiffs contended that the city did not have the power to enact such an ordinance, that the ordinance discriminated against their interests, and that it was an unreasonable burden on interstate commerce. Judge Loveless of the Prince Georges County Circuit court struck down all three claims thus enabling the city to begin enforcing the ordinance.

The National Resources Defense Council defended the case for Bowier and argued that "Studies have shown returnable bottles are reused an average of 18 times. Throwaways go directly to waste. Throwaways thus increase drastically a community's burden of collecting, transporting and disposing of beverage container waste." (*The New York Times*, Jan. 2, 1972).

The decision has possibly set a precedent for more than 20 local government bodies and the state of Oregon which have similar laws before courts. Beverage container laws are also being considered in 40 states, in more than 250 localities, and in Congress.



LANDLORDS MUST JUSTIFY RENT HIKES

Landlords must justify any increase in rents or tenants can refuse to pay it, according to a ruling by the Internal Revenue Service, which is responsible for enforcement in the economic stabilization program.

IRS recommended that landlords not raise rents "unless they keep complete records . . . and make the records available to tenants whose rents are to be increased."

The ruling said tenants are entitled to know "the base price . . . and the reason for any increase between the base period and the maximum price he (the landlord) was allowed to charge during the freeze."

In Phase II, rent controls have been removed from commercial and industrial properties but continue on most forms of residential property.

Increases have been approved in instances where 10 percent of similar units in the same building or complex were drawing higher rentals during the base period (July 15-Aug. 15), but the Price Commission has warned landlords to await new guidelines still being formulated by the Rent Advisory Board.

College of the Atlantic, a new private, coeducational, four-year non-denominational institution, is scheduled to open in September 1972 with a single curriculum focused on "understanding man's dependence upon, and responsibility to, his environment."

The college is to be located on Mount Desert Island, Maine, which has a population of 8,000, Acadia National Park and the Jackson Laboratory for the study of mammalian genetics.

A student body of 600 is expected by 1977. Applicants will be invited to spend several weeks at the location in Maine starting this summer and fall. For information write to the College of the Atlantic, Box 2, Bar Harbor, Maine 04609.

* * * * *

Developing countries are increasing their requests to the Peace Corps for volunteers to work on environmental problems. In an attempt to respond to these requests the Smithsonian Institution and the Peace Corps have a combined program to place graduate students in host-government agencies, or in scientific, conservation or other organizations assisting or cooperating with the host country.

Areas of scientific research include ecology, field biology, systematics, animal behavior, anthropology, preservation of endangered species, pollution control, conservation, and related environmental concerns. For further information contact Dr. Richard L. Jachowski, Smithsonian-Peace Corps Environmental Program, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. 20560.

**Editor's note: Recent Congressional fund-cutting has necessitated a 50 percent reduction in Peace Corps volunteers. However, applications will continue to be accepted although no volunteers will be signed up until July 1.

* * * * *

The 1971 Yearbook of Agriculture, recently published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, details how rural America can contribute to good living for all Americans in the next century. Subjects include the need for improved housing in rural America and for the creation of new growth centers around smaller cities and towns to encourage redistribution of the population and take some of the pressures off metropolitan centers. A series of articles by specialists outline potentials for the development of human, economic and natural resources. Copies of the illustrated 416-page hardbound book, titled *A Good Life for More People*, may be obtained from: Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 at \$3.50 per copy.

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