

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Protect urban environment, too

This is Earth Week. Eyes are turned to the rugged mountains, the deep forests, the fertile valleys, the rugged coast as we rejoice in the great beauty of our state. Earth Week — and concern for the environment — are considered by many to be the sole prerogative of the outdoorsman — the hunter, fisherman, hiker or mountain climber. Many city people — and especially minorities who are burdened with many other severe problems — do not take time to think about environmental issues.

This is a grave mistake. According to Barbara Blum, Deputy Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, "Inner-city people — white, yellow, brown and Black — suffer to an alarming degree from what are euphemistically known as disease of adaptation. These are not healthy adaptations, but diseases and chronic conditions resulting from living with bad air, polluted water, excessive noise, and continual stress. Hypertension, heart disease, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, sight and hearing impairments, cancer and congenital anomalies are all roughly fifty percent higher than the level for suburbanites. Behavioral, neurological and mental disorder are about double."

Suburbanites have triple the income and con-

sume four times as much energy as inner-city dwellers, but they are exposed to less than half the environmental health hazards. City dwellers are neighbors to the plants and factories that pollute the water and the air. They are surrounded by and interspersed with freeways, which belch forth carbon monoxide and noise. The older homes and public buildings bring danger of lead poisoning and asbestos caused lung disease. Two-thirds of the rat bites are suffered by ten percent of the people.

Clearly environmental protection and land use planning are important to minorities and to the poor. The dangers of nuclear or microwave radiation are as great; the tampering with our water supply as dangerous; the siting of freeways as significant; the encroachment of industry as devastating; the pollution of the air as debilitating to minorities as to the white middle class.

Minority people need to remember Earth Week, to join in the protests of nuclear power plants, to be involved in designing the Comprehensive Plan, and to demand representation on those boards and committees that determine what will be built and where — the boards and committees that determine how much pollution is warranted and how much suffering is "justified."

Another Point of View

Don't get sick; You can't afford to

From the Atlanta Enquirer

Failure by the Congress to pass the Carter Administration's hospital containment legislation would be another cruel blow for minority, poor, aged, uninsured and unemployed persons.

Minorities, on average, are least likely to be insured against spiraling hospital costs. They are more likely to have low incomes. And they are twice as likely to be unemployed. That makes them especially vulnerable to increases in the cost of health care.

And these costs are going up. Based on recent data from a sample of American Hospital Association hospitals, we know that in 1978 inflation-fueled hospital costs jumped 12.8%. In comparison, energy costs climbed 8%, food 11.8% and the Consumer Price Index 9%.

The realistic, flexible 9.7% cap on hospital cost increases proposed by President Carter would save the nation nearly \$53.4 billion between 1980 and 1984. Of the savings, \$21.8 billion would be in Federal taxes and \$5.9 billion in state and local taxes.

The savings would include \$5 billion in lower health insurance premiums for workers. Employers would spend \$15 billion less for hospital coverage — savings that could be passed on to workers in the form of higher take-home pay.

Also, the average cost of a hospital stay would be \$500 less, and the deductible a Medicare patient must pay for the first day of hospital care would be \$44 less.

Safeguards in the legislation exempt wage increases for non-supervisory hospital workers from the guidelines. They also prevent hospitals from improperly shifting poor patients to municipal or other hospitals.

Nine states with mandated controls have proved hospital increases can be slashed. Average increases in these states were 9.9% in 1978 compared with 12.8% in all states. One-third of the nation's 6,000 community hospitals proved in 1977 that cost increases can be held to 9.7% or below without affecting the quality of health care for patients.

The hospital industry insists on being left free to voluntarily cut its cost increases to an acceptable level. Congress bought this self-serving argument last year. The 12.8% cost increase in 1978 proves it won't work.

Polls consistently show taxpayers want relief in this area. They have a direct interest in how Congress responds to the President's proposed legislation.

In the meantime, 'Pop, don't get sick'; you can't afford to.



South Africa accuses the U.S. of spying

by N. Fungai Kumbula

The pretender to the South African, make that AZANIAN, premiership, one Pieter W. Botha went on South African national television this past week to blast the U.S. for spying against South Africa. He claims that the plane assigned to U.S. ambassador William P. Edmonson had been used to take aerial photos of "some of the most sensitive areas of South Africa," a clear reference to some of the apartheid regime's nuclear facilities.

Botha was so mad he summoned Edmonson to tell him he was expelling the five embassy personnel he was accusing of spying. They were given a week to get out of South Africa. Insisting he expected an apology from President Carter, he said "this was the kind of thing we would have expected from the Soviet Union but not from the U.S." That one statement should confirm to all what the U.S. has always denied; that South Africa sees the U.S. more as an ally than an adversary.

A statement issued by the U.S. State Department denied the spying charges and Carter said an apology would not be forthcoming because none was warranted. In retaliation, the U.S. expelled two South African military attaches who were stationed in Washington D.C. Considering there officially is no military

cooperation between South Africa and the U.S., one wonders what these military attaches were doing — window shopping maybe? Apparently, what we see is usually no more than the tip of the iceberg.

Whether the U.S. spied on South Africa or not is of very little importance to most of us. What is of importance, though, is that this puts a chill in U.S. — South African relations. And that chill can be used to our benefit. Anti-apartheid groups around the country can seize on this godsend which arrives right on the heels of 'Muldergate'! Since the interests of apartheid and the interests of all freedom loving people are inversely proportional, a diplomatic setback of this nature would represent a major victory for us.

Who knows? If enough pressure is brought to bear, maybe even the U.S. embassy in Pretoria (South Africa's capital) could be compelled to close. If this happens, that could exert a lot of pressure on all those U.S. corporations to withdraw from South Africa. If they withdraw, that would force the South African electorate to either abandon apartheid and bring all people into the mainstream of South African life or face economic ruin. It would be a question of SURVIVAL.

This may sound like so much

speculation but, it's not as far-fetched as it might appear. It is a definite possibility. This diplomatic boo boo, coupled with 'Muldergate' should provide all anti apartheid activists with a lot of new ammunition.

A State Department official advances the theory that, by playing up this 'spying' incident, Botha may be trying to divert attention from 'Muldergate' which still threatens to engulf both him and his predecessor, Johannes Vorster. The official says that the State Department is disappointed that South Africa has decided to field these charges at a time when they are also negotiating Namibia's independence.

The first theory sounds plausible enough but the second sentiment is a little weak. South Africa has never really intended for Namibia to go free. Consequently, if she had not seized on this incident as a way out of the negotiations, chances are she would have found some other way of stalling.

As we go to press, there has not been any more news on the matter but, since this is the first such diplomatic mess between Washington and Pretoria, there definitely will be a lot more fallout from this incident. Meantime, we can all get to work fanning the flames.

Energy and Equality

by Bayard Rustin

My grandmother once had a friend who dreaded the prospect of visiting the doctor. As she saw things, doctors did nothing more than cause pain, and overcharge poor people for unnecessary medicines, needles, and additional visits. This poor woman, however, suffered from high blood pressure, and she did in fact need regular medical treatment. Thus, every two weeks we went through the same ritual, assuring her that she was indeed ill, and that the doctor would do everything possible to avoid causing pain or discomfort.

By using common sense, and by demonstrating some concern and human sensitivity, my grandmother helped keep her old friend alive to the ripe old age of 87. Without the gentle persuasion of my grandmother, the old lady would never have gone to the doctor and, in all probability, she would have died of a stroke, years before her time.

This little story came to mind as I re-read President Carter's speech on the energy crisis. The American people, it seems to me, resemble my grandmother's old friend. Like her, they have very serious doubts about the existence of a disease, in this case the "energy crisis." And, like her again, they fear the pain and cost of Dr. Carter's treatment, specifically his proposal to eliminate price controls on domestically-produced oil.

While President Carter insists that "the energy crisis is real, (and) time is running out," few poor people and middle-income workers believe in the "energy disease." Last year, for instance, a CBS/*New York Times* poll found that only 32% of people earning less than \$8,000 thought that the energy crisis was real. At the same time, 53% agreed that "we are just being told there are shortages so oil and gas companies can charge higher prices." The poll uncovered the same sort of skepticism among all income

groups, except the very highest.

As I see it, this widespread skepticism about the "energy crisis," a skepticism which immediately condemns any national energy plan to almost certain failure, springs from a pervasive and healthy sense of outrage about the inequities and outright injustices that have characterized every national energy plan from Nixon to Ford to Carter. In all fairness, of course, President Carter's proposed excess profits tax is an attempt at providing some sense of equity to his energy policy. But strong corporate opposition to the tax, as well as Carter's own half-hearted support for the measure make the attack on excess profits little more than a symbolic gesture.

By relying almost exclusively on price decontrol, the exact strategy so vigorously supported by the oil and gas corporations, President Carter's energy program further aggravates the sense of distrust and disbelief among poor and working people because they, and they alone, bear the heaviest and most unjust burden in the effort to conserve energy and to achieve independence from the whims of the OPEC nations. Moreover, my charge of unfairness is not careless rhetoric, it is supported by hard, cold facts. Consider these points: according to one recent study, the average low-income household spends more than 20% of its gross — before taxes — income on gasoline and home energy bills. To make matters worse, the same study showed that poor people pay significantly higher rates for energy than do families with much higher incomes. All this, of course, means that poor people will once again be forced to cutback their other expenses, expenses for food, housing and the basic necessities of life. And this will occur while something like \$32 billion is transferred from consumers to oil companies during the next 28 months. Conservatives who so

mournfully complain about "redistributionist tendencies" in our society will, I hope, take note.

Aside from the important issue of "energy justice," we must also take a careful look at the workability and effectiveness of various proposals, especially those favored by the oil and gas industries. Oil decontrol serves as a perfect example. While industry spokesman, joined now by officials from the U.S. Department of Energy, claim that decontrol will result in sizable increases in oil production, numerous studies contradict such forecasts. Charles Curtis, chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, cited a study that indicates that the higher price tag on gasoline resulting from decontrol will guarantee virtually no increase in domestic oil production during 1979. And another study by the Department of Energy on the de-regulation of natural gas showed that a 50% price rise will cause only a 6% increase in production. In light of these facts, then, it seems senseless to have much hope in decontrol as a solution to the energy problem.

What can be done about this steadily worsening situation? As a start, I suggest that President Carter follow my grandmother's example by firmly convincing the nation that the energy crisis is indeed a real disease, not some contrived fantasy. But how can skeptical, cynical people be persuaded that a crisis exists? In my view, there is only one truly effective means of persuasion, and that is the development of a national energy program characterized by justice, compassion for the poor, equal sacrifice, and a strong air tight lid on windfall profits. Until we devise an energy policy widely perceived as fair, one of our most serious national diseases will go untreated because the patient is frightened and wary of the unscrupulous medicine man.



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PORTLAND OBSERVER

The *Portland Observer* (USPS 959-880) is published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, Inc., 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217, Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

Subscriptions: \$7.50 per year in Tri-County area; \$8.00 per year outside Tri-County Area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the *Portland Observer*, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.

The *Portland Observer's* official position is expressed only in its Editorial column. Any other material throughout the paper is the opinion of the individual writer or submitter and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the *Portland Observer*.

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Adair joins Emanuel staff

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Emanuel. "What are your objectives at the hospital? "First, I'd like to enhance the opportunities for women and the handicapped individuals. I wasn't able to do much at Georgia-Pacific because of certain barriers," he said.

Are there barriers at Emanuel? "I think the same barriers exist, but the management here is more open to change, and they are always looking for a way to make their system more efficient," he added. "Besides, Emanuel is light-years ahead of other organizations as far as affirmative action is concerned. They make my job easy . . ."

Do the employees have high expectations? "I'm sure that they do — some come into the office to see if I'm for real or not. But they have to understand what my position is, I do not have veto power," he said. "There are limitations."

How does it feel to work in the

same place in which you were born? "At first I had mixed emotions, but the job started to grow on me. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise," said Adair.

"Besides, my 88-year-old grandfather, Appleton Charles (A.C.) Adair lives directly across the street from the hospital. I can look out my office window and see him on the

porch or walk across the street to see him," he said.

"I bet my grandfather had no idea when he ran across the street twenty-nine years ago to see me for the first time, that I would eventually return to the hospital in this capacity," said a smiling Adair.

"Maybe it was meant to be . . ."

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