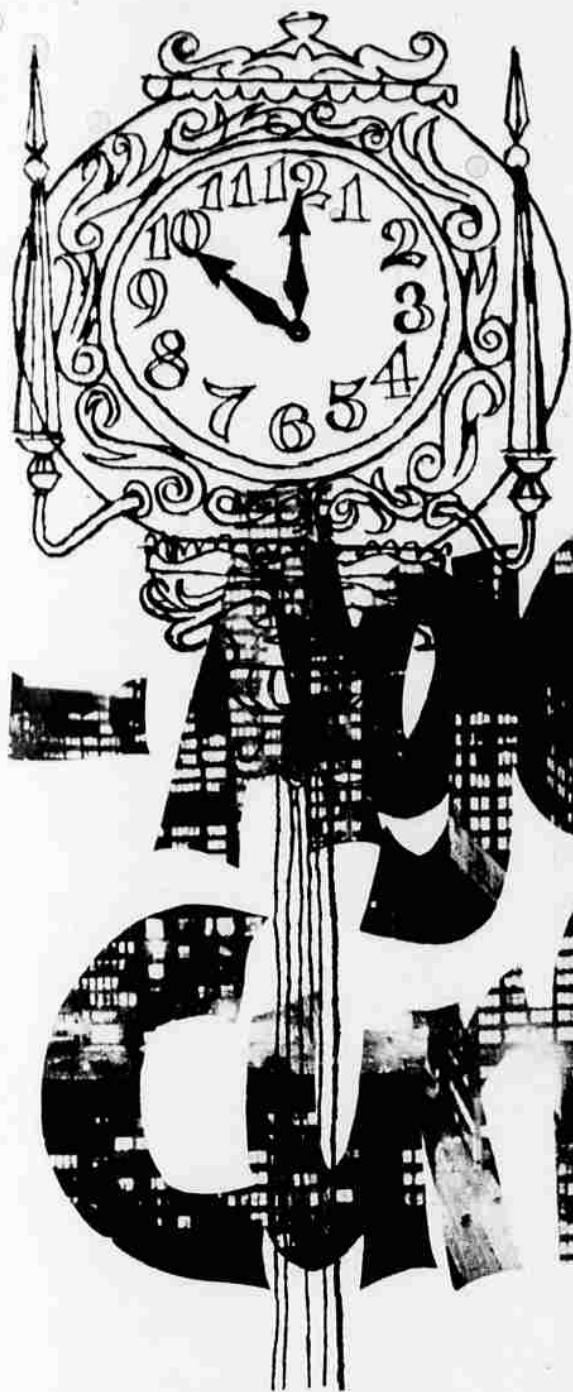




More communities are adopting this restriction to combat delinquency, but is it doing the job?

from modernizing police records on juvenile crime to building a recreational center, never got a full hearing. Things like that cost money and time. The public wanted a cheap, overnight cure for delinquency. The curfew seemed to be the answer."

It wasn't, the city manager feels, although he still believes curfews have marginal values. "The difficulty," he says, "is that people don't understand that curfews are not an end in themselves, but simply one phase of what must be a broader, more imaginative approach to a complex problem."

Even that limited approval of curfews would be disputed by all-out opponents. Some claim that curfews discriminate against a certain class of citizens and therefore have no place in America. Others say curfews are unfair in punishing all teen-agers for the misconduct of a few, and they cite recent New York City statistics showing that one percent of the community's families are responsible for 75 percent of juvenile delinquency.

The city of Clearfield, Utah, registered one of the most unusual objections, however—its citizens complained that the curfew siren at 10 p.m. was waking their children!

The American Municipal Association,

a group representing 12,000 cities, has studied curfews for years and the best it can say for them is that they "focus attention" on the teen-age problem.

"Nonsense!" opponents retort. "Curfews actually cover up the teen-age problem. They deceive the public into believing they've cleaned up their town when all they've really done is sweep the dirt under the rug."

IN RECENT MONTHS, curfew supporters have found a new and thought-provoking argument. A series of crimes against children has shocked more than one community—indeed, more than one nation. The victims of these crimes usually have been walking the streets late at night. In Chicago, scene of six brutal child killings in two years, stricter enforcement of a half-forgotten curfew has been urged, not as a restriction on the city's youth but as a protection.

One group probably will never be won by the arguments of curfew backers. They are teen-agers themselves. One national survey of youngsters reported that only 16 percent favored a curfew in their towns.

However, the survey found that few of the teen-agers actually would be affected by such a law; their parents

already had imposed stricter limitations on their night hours. The youths' objections were on principle. "It's one thing for your father to tell you when to come in," a teen-ager said, "but another for a stranger to do it. What do they know about us anyway?"

Curfews are aimed precisely at this point—getting the few careless parents in every community to keep better tab on their offspring. But do curfews make errant parents more conscious of their responsibility?

A Florida police officer doubts it. He recalls how he conscientiously enforced his town's curfew. "Then one night," he says, "I picked up four kids loitering under a street lamp, and I took them home. But not one of their parents was home! Curfew? It was better to leave the kids on the street where at least I could keep an eye on them!"

(Family Weekly welcomes your views on teen-age curfews, in 300 words or less. Letters must be postmarked no later than midnight, December 16. If we print your letter, you will be paid \$25. Letters must be signed but names will be withheld on request. Letters cannot be returned. Address contributions to Curfew, Family Weekly, 179 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 1, Ill.)

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