

# The Inquiring Mind

This series of articles, on many different subjects, results from work by senior students at the school of journalism at the University of Oregon. Each is a condensed version of a full-length thesis written as partial requirement for graduation at the school.

## FLUORIDATION: A REVOLUTION IN THE NATION'S DENTAL HEALTH

By Sylvia Rawlinson

The fluoridation of public water supplies is one issue on the ballot over which few Americans have remained apathetically indifferent. Since it appeared before the voters in cities of New York and Wisconsin about a decade and a half ago, it has evolved into the most controversial public health issue since compulsory vaccination was advocated.

Studies on fluorides in connection with dental health were begun by Drs. G. V. Black and Frederick S. McKay in 1906 in Colorado Springs. As it became increasingly apparent that the amount of fluoride in tooth enamel had a beneficial effect in limiting decay, the United States Public Health Service appointed H. Trendley Dean to investigate.

In 1945, Newburgh and Kingston, New York began the most extensive public health experiment ever conducted in this country. Kingston served as a control city while Newburgh added sodium fluoride to the water supply to bring the fluoride content up to one part per million. This level had, according to all previous findings, been both safe and effective in inhibiting decay.

**Results of Experiment**  
Results of this momentous 10-year experiment indicated that the addition of one part fluoride per million parts water reduced tooth decay by 58 per cent among children receiving the treated water from birth to the age of 10. Furthermore, extensive physical exams conducted throughout the test revealed that the fluoride in the water had caused no medical defects.

By 1950, the Public Health Service had approved mass fluoridation in communities where the chemical was not naturally present in the water supply. Shortly thereafter, the American Dental Association endorsed the measure. It was then that the fluoridation issue began being buffeted about by public opinion.

In cities considering the addition of fluorides to the public water supply, the citizens were deluged with pamphlets, fliers and telephone calls urging them to keep this "rat poison" out of the water. Wherever fluoridation was a public issue, the same arguments appeared.

**Four Major Premises**  
Opponents of fluoridation use their arguments on four major premises: fluorine is a cumulative poison and experimentation has been inadequate to warrant mass acceptance, the proposal violates constitutional rights of the individual, it interferes with the beliefs of some religious groups and it is a Communist conspiracy to undermine man's nervous system.

No one has denied the fact that fluorine is poisonous to man in concentrated dosages. This is not too valid an argument in view of the fact

that many chemicals in our basic diets are poisonous in quantity - even table salt. With fluorine in water at one part per million, a person would have to drink a whole bathtub of water at one time in order to observe any ill effects. And it might be a real job to discover whether the volume of water or the fluorine was responsible for any reactions.

Cumulative effects also are insignificant at this level, as evidenced by the presence of fluorine in many foods. It has also been discovered that the body excretes a large amount of the fluorine ingested within a few hours.

**Experimentation**  
Arguments which assert the doubt that fluoridation has not received sufficient experimentation are invalid also. Public health officials have repeatedly asserted that no other public health measure has undergone such extensive experimentation before recommendation. They refer both to the results of the Newburgh-Kingston 10-year study and to the natural occurrence of fluorides in the water supplies of many cities. The occurrence of brown staining or "mottling" of tooth enamel was observed only in instances where fluorides occurred in excess of the recommended one part per million.

The charge that fluoridation is unconstitutional carries little weight. The Supreme Court has refused to rule on it at all, maintaining that it is not a constitutional issue. Even the charge of socialized medicine through "mass medication" is a dramatization. Fluoridation is left to the vote of individual communities and there has been no federal ruling on the measure. In the strictest sense of the word, fluorine is not really medication, but rather a preventative to be used along with other dental health precautions.

**Sensational Charge**  
Possibly the most sensational and far-fetched charge against fluoridation is that proposed by some who feel that it represents a Communist conspiracy. This charge is based on the fact that fluorine, in poisonous dosages, acts on man's nervous system to gradually reduce his reasoning processes. An enemy could supposedly dump the stored supply of sodium fluoride in the water supply to destroy the inhabitants of a city by wholesale means. This is a highly inaccurate and unlikely argument. An enemy would be most ineffective in choosing to poison the water with sodium fluoride. Several tons would be necessary to provide lethal concentrations, and storage facilities and equipment of public water works are simply not constructed to handle such quantities of chemicals. Many other poisons would provide a more expedient and effective weapon for the purposes of an enemy.

As a means of bridging all this opposition, alternative methods of supplying fluoride as a dental preventive have been considered. The ideal vehicle for fluoride should be such that its consumption will correspond with the capacity for such intake by the individual. At the same time, it should be available to the largest part of the population, from birth to 10 years of age. It is a well-known fact among dental authorities that the most extensive dental neglect occurs among low-income families who are not financially able to secure regular dental check-ups. They are also uneducated with respect to the importance of dental hygiene.

**Alternative Methods**  
Some alternative methods of providing fluoride have been proposed but most of them, fail to meet the demands of the low-income group. The addition of fluoride to foods would require extensive experimentation and would probably result in extremely unequal consumption since diets and tastes vary so among individuals.

Fluoride pills have been effective when used, but the problem which their use imposes would be one of education as to their proper use and poisonous aspects if treated carelessly.

For maximum benefit, fluorine should be ingested at the time of tooth formation and eruption. From all standpoints, the fluoridation of public water supplies, at an average cost of 9 cents per person per year, is the most logical vehicle.

The referendum has repeatedly placed the fluoridation issue in the hands of the voters. They must decide on a medical and scientific issue which has entered the political realm and is subject to political manipulation by special interest groups. The community considering fluoridation must be educated about it. Once people are informed about an issue, they are immune to emotional appeals. Meanwhile, another generation of Americans with poor teeth is the inevitable result of a lot of irrational and irresponsible thinking.



**RUNAWAY TRUCK**—A heavy grain truck, out of control on a steep hill in Duluth, Minn., smashed three homes as well as an automobile before coming to a halt. The truck driver, his wife who was with him, and a motorist were killed, and four other persons were injured.

MAIL TRIBUNE, Medford, Or. Monday, June 29, 1959

## 4-H Club News

**Can Canners**  
The monthly meeting of the Can Canners 4-H club was held June 17 at the home of the leader, Mrs. Bagley. A demonstration on making grape jelly was given by Christy Elrod. The next meeting will be held July 15.

**Buttered Buns**  
The Buttered Buns met at the home of Barbara Moore Tuesday at 2 p.m. Four demonstrations were given and Mrs. Barnes talked about prefr and the contest at the courthouse.

**Ruch Appetizers**  
Our last meeting was held at Mrs. Kay Straube's. Louie Barker made a drink made of mashed strawberries and milk.

The secretary didn't have any minutes so she gave roll call. We discussed a swimming party at Twin Plunges. Mary Ann Barker will bake a lemon pie and Richard Bottger will make a drink at the next meeting July 11 at Kay Straube's.

**Reese Creek Renegades**  
A meet of the Reese Creek Renegades was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Calloway. We judged some Angus heifers and had a short quiz. The next meeting club will be at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Phillips on July 14.

**David Calloway, Reporter.**

## Ike's Policies Blamed by Demos For Price Threats

Washington - (UPI) - Democrats charged today that the threat of new price hikes is caused by President Eisenhower's policies rather than any strong congressional pressure for "irresponsible spending" cited by a cabinet report.

House Democratic Leader John W. McCormack (Mass.) generally summed up his party's reaction to the report by accusing Eisenhower of trying to blame the Democratic-controlled Congress for the fruits of his own actions.

**Budget Cut Promised**  
"The Congress always has appropriated less money than Mr. Eisenhower wanted," McCormack said. "So if there is any excessive spending, the President is responsible." He promised Congress would cut the President's budget again this year.

The report, prepared by a special committee headed by Vice President Richard M. Nixon, urged Congress to thwart a "serious risk" of further price increases by enacting Eisenhower's anti-inflation program. It said the country is at a "critical juncture" because of inflationary pressures and congressional sentiment for reckless spending.

**Tax Relief Hinted**  
The report also hinted that some form of tax relief "can perhaps be realized soon." It did not spell out the kind of "needed tax reforms," saying merely that "studies are now under way with a view to proposing changes in our tax laws at the appropriate time."

Sen. Paul H. Douglas (D-Ill.), chairman of the Congressional Economic Committee which is making its own study of inflation and other economic problems, denounced the Nixon group's report as "a thoroughly milk toast affair."

He said it ignored the ad-

## Vending Machine Future Predicted

New York - (UPI) - Vending machines will some day cook full-course meals in a matter of seconds and put "automatic groceries" at the housewife's door.

So says Robert Z. Greene, chairman of the executive committee of the Automatic Canteen Company of America and president of the Rowe Manufacturing Company.

Greene sees the day when complete meals, kept fresh in vending machines by refrigeration or in sealed containers, may actually be cooked electronically in a few moments after the coin is inserted.

He also predicts "automatic groceries" in multiple dwellings, which will sell all kinds of fresh and frozen foods right at the housewife's door.

## Canadians Solve Flower Problem

Detroit - (UPI) - Queen Elizabeth's visit to Canada posted a floral problem for Canadians that had to be solved by American experts.

The Canadians wanted to know what kind of bouquet to present to the Queen. A Victorian nosegay of pink and red sweetheart roses, lilies of the valley, white carnations, narcissus, forget-me-nots and yellow daisies, replied the Florists' Telegraph Delivery Association.

However, a Canadian florist had to make up the bouquet and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had to inspect it well in advance for any sharp wires or pointed materials that might scratch the Queen's fingers.

administration's opposition to "sound proposals" for plugging tax loopholes which would have enabled the government "to reduce taxes in other directions, to make needed welfare and defense expenditures and to reduce the public debt."

## Clackamas River Dam Dedicated

Estacada - (UPI) - The \$25 million Northfork dam on the Clackamas river three miles from here was formally dedicated Sunday with about 8,000 persons gathering for the official ceremonies and an aquatic show on the reservoir afterward.

The Portland General Electric Company project adds 54,000 kilowatts to the Northwest power pool. Thomas W. Delzell, PGE chairman of the board, told the crowd the variable radius arch dam was "a monument to the multiple use of our natural resources." The dam, 207 feet high and only eight feet through at the crest, is reported to be the thinnest for its height in the world. Northfork is designed to "give" in the middle with the force of the river, thereby allowing firmer extension of its sides into the anchorages of the canyon wall.

**FIRE STRIKES OUT**  
Lowestoft, England - (UPI) - Two Dutch salvage vessels put out a fire in the hold of the 628-ton British freighter Staniel on a tourist-filled beach Sunday. The Dutch vessels pumped thousands of tons of water into the burning cargo of the Staniel.

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<b>Ripe Olives</b> Pitted. Mt. Whitney brand, extra-large size. Grand flavor.	<b>3 1/2-lb. \$1.00</b>
<b>Tomato Soup</b> Campbell's. A lunch time favorite!	<b>9 10 1/2-oz. \$1.00</b>

<b>Cleanser</b> White Magic household	2 14-oz. 25c
<b>Charcoal</b> Neet Heat lighter included	28-oz. pkg. 39c
<b>Fig Bars</b> Melrose Vanilla flavor	1-lb. pkg. 29c
<b>Kool Aid</b> Refreshing drink Assorted flavors	6 Pkgs. 29c
<b>French Fries</b> Ore-Ida crinkle cut	16-oz. pkg. 35c
<b>Potato Patties</b> Bel-air brand Heat 'n serve	12-oz. pkg. 3/50c
<b>Bread</b> Save 2c on Mrs. Wright's white or wheat	large loaf 31c
<b>Rye Bread</b> Skylark brand	1-lb. loaf 28c
<b>Buttermilk</b> Richer Lucerne	qt. 21c
<b>Grape Drink</b> or Orange-Lucerne	2 1/2 gals. 65c
<b>Cigarettes</b> Luckies, Camels, Chesterfield	ctn. reg. size \$1.85

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