

Silence Still Golden; In Fact, It's High Priced

Washington - (Science Service) - Silence still is golden. In fact, it may be priced beyond reach in this noisy jet and rocket age.

The role of economics in getting rid of today's increasing noises was pointed out by Dr. Richard H. Bolt, professor of acoustics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and associate director of research for the National Science Foundation, in testimony before the House Committee on Science and Astronautics at hearings on the effect and control of noise.

The annoyance level of noise, or what Dr. Bolt defines as "unwanted sound," is determined by much more than just intensity. Most persons, for example, enjoy the loud rush of a waterfall while the relatively small whine of a mosquito is often intolerable.

Noises made by jets and rockets certainly are "unwanted sounds," particularly unwanted by those who live near airports and launching facilities. But, these noises are here to stay, Dr. Bolt said, unless the high performance and advantages of swift travel of supersonic aircraft are sacrificed.

Can Be Reduced
"The noise from these powerful sources, when off the ground, can be reduced by only a small margin without incurring severe penalties in performance." On the ground, jets and rockets can be muffled to almost any extent, "limited only by dollars."

The national investment in combating noise has been from 20 to 25 million dollars in the past 15 years. The bulk of this support has come from the armed forces and the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, now superseded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Ira H. Abbott, director of NASA's office of advanced research programs, told the committee that "it is reasonable to expect a solution to this problem."

Dr. Bolt said progress in combating the noises made by new machines is counterbalanced by advances in their development that make them work better but noisier.

"Acoustic perfume," the substitution of a preferred sound (music, waterfalls) for a noisy unwanted one, was suggested by Dr. Bolt as a method that has proved successful in lessening the impact of noise.

Successful in Dentistry
It has proved successful in dentistry, he noted, where dentists have employed an "audiac," a device whereby the sound of the drill is obscured for the patients by music and other pleasing sounds.

It also has been found that air-conditioning in homes near airports lessened the impact of noisy take-offs and landings.

Dr. Bolt suggests major advances will be made through nationwide planning for aviation facilities, airports and areas abutting sources of noise.

"Although it must incorporate scientific information," he said, "such planning is not a subject of scientific research. It is one of national understanding and coordinated action."

However, at the present time, the national regulations set by the Federal Aviation Agency for noise reduction for airports and facilities allow for greater exposure to noise than do the airport regulations set by New York Port authority.

'Fill Her Up' Order Difficult for Tender

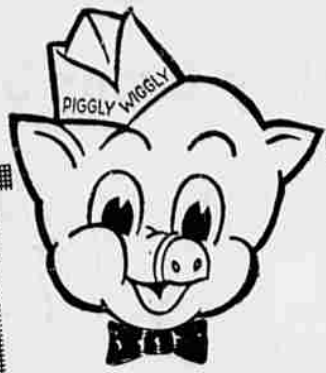
St. Louis - Bartender Valentine Tattich had more trouble than usual, this time, in complying with the order to "fill her up."

A car broke the paving over a 120-year-old well on the parking lot next to the cocktail lounge where Tattich works.

It took more than a ton of rock to fill the old well to the water level.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Washington, (Science Service) - Partial bathing helps patients with high blood pressure. Dr. Takashi Sugiyama, Tohoku University Institute of Balneology, Japan, reported at the Third International Congress of Physical Medicine here. Dr. Sugiyama said a simple partial-bathing apparatus he devised had a normalizing action on blood pressure, which continues to fall with its use for two to three weeks. Water bathing of the whole body or partial bathing of the extremities is a popular form of therapy for high blood pressure in Japan and other oriental countries.



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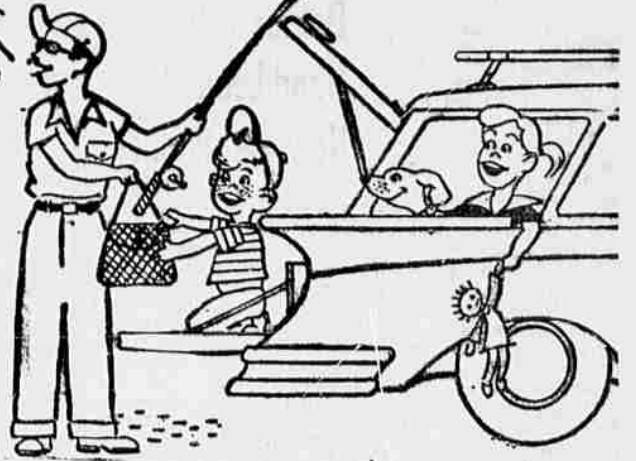
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