

The Medical Roundup

by *Walter Alvarez*

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Mayo Clinic
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Hurler's Syndrome

"Several people have been asking me what is Hurler's syndrome. They say that their child is said to have this disease, and they wonder if anything can be done to cure him. Unfortunately I have to say I don't know of any cure."

In a typical case the child is dwarfed and has some deformity of the skeleton. Sometimes he has an unpleasant looking face; he may be deaf; he may have clouding of the cornea (front window of the eye); he may have a large liver and spleen, and he usually has some congenital defects

in the heart. He may have a stiffness in some points and perhaps saddest of all, he usually has some mental retardation.

The diagnosis can usually be made by studying a specimen of skin taken from the fingers or from the back of the chest. These bits of skin will show chronic inflammatory changes that are characteristic of the disease.

Unfortunately, there are dozens of strange diseases like those, most of which are hereditary in nature, and produce such marked abnormalities that no physician can hope to make the child over into a normal youngster. Perhaps because the disease tends to skip two or three generations, it is hard in a given case to say just why it showed up in the child of two people

Best Test of a Heart

I recently received a letter from a woman who says that the other day her doctor made an electrocardiogram and was horrified over the changes he found in it. He was so disturbed that he wanted her to go right to bed and stay there for weeks. But, as she says very wisely, she doubts the need for this because she is still playing a good game of tennis. I greatly respect her wisdom. If today I could still play a fast game of tennis, I wouldn't care what my electrocardiogram looked like, and nobody could scare me about it.

Often I have been amazed at the way in which a colleague got frightened when he found a child with a heart murmur. I can remember, some 45 years ago, seeing a boy with a loud heart murmur. It was so loud that one of the best children's specialists in the city wanted to keep the child in bed for a year. He did keep him in bed for months until I insisted that the boy was not ill. He was never listless or short of breath, and many a time when I came into his room I found him bouncing up and down on his bed, or wrestling with his brother. And so I said, "Let's forget the murmur."

That was 45 years ago, and today that boy has grown into a big powerful athletic man of 50 who, in his college days, was a crack athlete. I imagine he still has his murmur.

I suppose that a thousand times during my medical lifetime, I have mused over the fact that a little common sense is worth a hundred electrocardiograms or laboratory tests.

I can still remember the man of 75 whom I saw years ago in San Francisco; he came to consult me about a little arthritis in his hand. On checking him over and listening to his chest, I heard a very loud murmur, due apparently to some congenital peculiarity in his heart. When I asked him about it, he said, "Oh yes, that was discovered when I was 20 and three or four consultants assured my father I would be dead within six months. I said then, 'If I have only six months to live, I want to live richly and with excitement' and so I went to Paris and had a fling. But after some two months I got fed up with idleness and so I went back to work. That was 55 years ago, and never have I been seriously ill."

Should a man work again after a heart attack? Should heart patients fly in an airplane? Answers to these and other questions may be found in Dr. Alvarez' booklet, "Heart Trouble." You may obtain this booklet by sending 25 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, The Register and Tribune Syndicate, Box 957, Des Moines 4, Iowa.

\$543,000 Grant for Astoria Approved

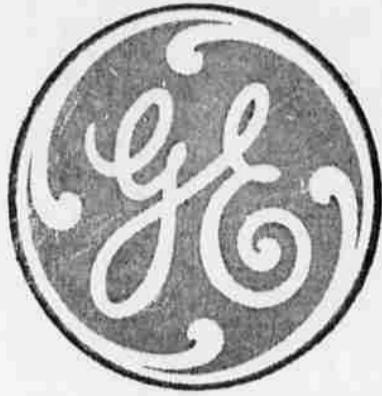
Washington (AP)—The Community Facilities Administration has approved a grant of \$543,000 to Astoria, Ore., under the accelerated public works program to provide one-half the cost of construction of water facilities, the offices of Sons, Maurine Neuberger and Wayne Morse said Thursday.

The project is expected to be placed under construction within 120 days and provide 440 man-months of on-site labor. It provides replacement of existing water transmission lines.

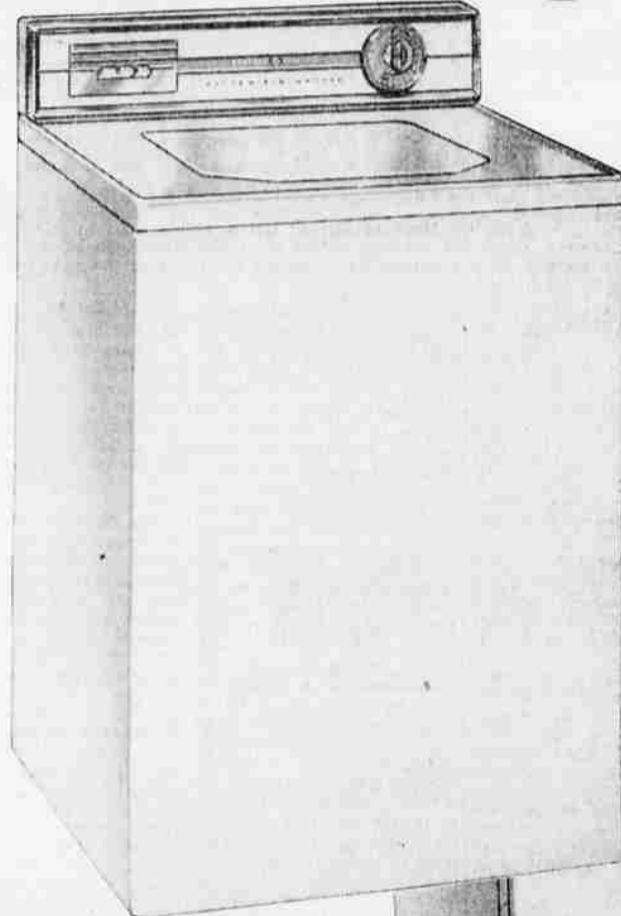
Hereford Association Program Is Planned

Nat Etzel, vocational agriculture instructor for Eagle Point High school, will show slides and give a talk on conditions behind the iron curtain at a meeting of the Cal-Ore Hereford association at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 20, at North's Chuckwagon in Medford. Etzel's talk will be on his

observations made during last summer's "People-to-People" program tour when he and his wife accompanied 16 Oregon FFA boys on a visit of eastern and western European countries.



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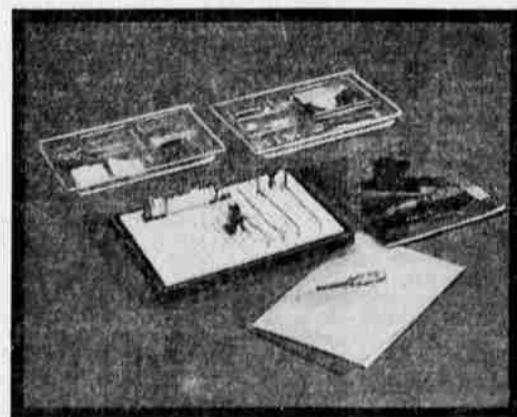
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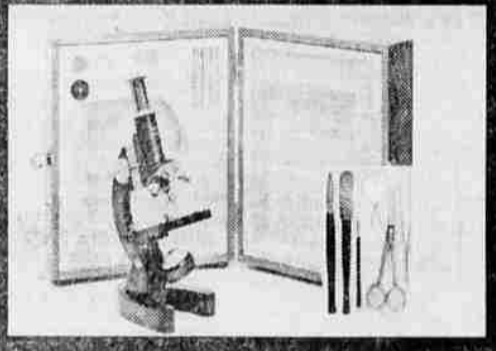


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