

SUMNER GAZETTE

OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE TOWN OF SUMNER
AND OF BREMER COUNTY

Telephone 224-1331 or 1333 — Night Phone 224-5229 or 3639

THE GAZETTE is published every Thursday morning by the Sumner Gazette Publishing Co., at Sumner, Iowa 50671, and entered as second class matter at the post office at Sumner, Iowa, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

COMMUNICATIONS from readers are always welcome and will be published at the discretion of the editor unless it is specifically requested that they not be published. However, all letters published must have a signature and the name of the writer will also be published.

THE LABEL on your paper signifies from what time expires. Thus if it reads 1-17-71 it means your subscription expires at that time.

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Bremer, Black Hawk, Fayette and Chickasaw County \$5.00
Elsewhere in Iowa \$5.00
Service men and Members of the Clergy \$4.00
Outside of Iowa \$7.50
Paperboy Service, City of Sumner, only \$8.00

Thursday Morning, May 7, 1970

NEWS OF THE STATE



E-DAVE

The recent observance of Earth Day should have made all Iowans more keenly aware of the pollution problem. Seldom has there been such an observance; there was a spontaneous reaction, particularly on the part of students. In this day and age where nearly everything is organized, it was kind of exciting to see an event such as Earth Day come off without benefit of a statewide committee or chairman.

As one might suspect, major activity centered on college campuses. Still the kids, from grade school through high school, did their thing. Take Centerville for example. A picket fence was erected in the middle of the square and students in the Centerville public school system were dismissed for the day. Armed with huge plastic bags the students combed over the countryside picking up trash and dumping it on the court-house lawn. Needless to say the circle marked off the picket fence was overflowing with bags and boxes of litter.

While there were many speakers in the state for the occasion, the biggest drawing card turned out to be Dr. Paul Ehrlich, ecologist from Stanford University and author of "The Population Bomb." Nearly 6,000 people turned out to hear Ehrlich at Ames. With his rapid-fire delivery, Ehrlich told an avid listening audience that population control is the only answer to the environmental predicament of control, all other systems will fail, he said. What we need, he added, is a crash program in population control. Each one must decide for himself to limit families or else governments will decide for them.

Another nationally known speaker on the Ames campus was Read Bryson a University of Wisconsin meteorologist who said, "we are much closer to an ice age than most people realize."

Pollution to complicate problem of water re-use

Editor's Note: This is the third of a series of articles on environmental problems.

IOWA CITY — Chanute, Kan., was caught in a drought year—its usually abundant stream flowing at a bare trickle.

Below the sewage treatment plant, the town built a dam. And seven times that summer Chanute purified and reused the water from the plant. Laden with detergent it poured from the faucet with a "head" like a glass of beer.

The U. S. as a nation will soon have much in common with Chanute, says University of Iowa environmental engineer Richard Dague.

"The prospects for water reuse are clear," he said. "If we are to satisfy our water needs, reuse—in some form—must come to play an increasingly critical role."

The reason, the Iowa professor explains, is simple. Americans now use more water each day than the country's daily dependable fresh water supply. And the gap will continue to grow.

Right now, Dr. Dague points

out, nearly one out of four glasses of water consumed by humans in some parts of the nation has been in an upstream sewer.

Currently, "Americans use about 300 billion gallons a day in homes, factories and on farms. By 1980 the U. S. will need about 450 billion gallons of water each day. And if current rates of increase continue, water needs will rise to 1,000 billion (or one trillion) gallons daily by the year 2000—though the dependable daily supply from rain and snow will average only 515 billion gallons.

"To meet the need," Dague emphasizes, "we will have to reuse water for many purposes."

But water reuse, Dague explains, becomes increasingly difficult as our population and economy grow and as pollution problems multiply. Already, an estimated 95 million Americans drink water that is below federal standards or of unknown quality.

And experts have estimated that if all wastes from human and industrial sources could be

treated with 85 per cent effectiveness—which is far from the case today—municipal discharges into rivers would still be greater in 1980 than they were in 1962 and would have doubled by the year 2020.

"The technology exists to convert domestic sewage into safe drinking water, but some 15 percent of the sewerage communities in the U. S., serving a population of nearly 12 million, still have no facilities for sewage treatment," Dague says.

"And another 20 per cent of the communities, serving a population of 44 million, have only a partial (primary) treatment capable of treating wastes with about 30 per cent effectiveness."

The U of I professor notes that the needs for industrial waste treatment in many areas dwarf the domestic waste problem. Nationally, industry discharges about 3.4 times the quantity of wastewater arising from the domestic population. And by the year 2000, industrial wastes are expected to increase about seven times.

Although we won't be overwhelmed by glacial ice in the next 20 years, or even the next 200 years, Bryson said, the modern cooling trend in the earth's atmosphere could trigger such a drastic climatic change. He said the earth is currently undergoing one of the three great climatic changes of the past 10,000 years.

Why is our atmosphere cooling? Bryson attributes the drop in changes in the atmosphere's reflectivity caused by pollution. According to Bryson, very slight changes in the solar heat input can have drastic effects on climate. "A one-third degree centigrade change in temperature means we've come one-twelfth of the distance to an ice age in 23 years," he said. The economic effects of climatic change can be devastating. For example, Iowa might be pushed out of the corn belt if the present cooling trend continues.

Still another speaker at Iowa State, William H. Stieckel of the U.S. Bureau of Sports, Fisheries and Wildlife said the persistence of the chemicals found in pest-

icides should be the target for correcting that pollution problem, not the chemical properties themselves. Stieckel, a research biologist, did not charge the full responsibility of cleaning up the pesticide pollution to the chemical companies themselves.

Instead he called for licensing authorities to require more thorough testing before approval is given for the manufacture and use of a pesticide. It is at this point, he said, where the chemical companies will be more willing to work on the problem, rather than waiting until they have a chemical in production and sale. Any pesticide which is effective, Stieckel said, will have its dangers, but a great improvement will be made if the persistence of these chemicals can be lowered. Ideally, he added, the chemical should last through the growing season so it will serve the farmers' purpose, but should drop off rapidly after that. There is some "real hope" for preserving wildlife, he concluded, "if we don't poison it out."

At the University of Iowa, at Iowa City, Newsweek magazine science editor George Alexander said it will be a real tragedy both if nothing is done except talking about ecology and if the issues become an obsession blotting out concern for other social ills. Much of his lecture on "pollution, media and public awareness" was devoted to a discussion of the media.

Alexander said that pollution will have to be dealt with editorially over a long period of time in contrast with usual news coverage which changes from day-to-day.

At Coe College, in Cedar Rapids, Dr. William C. Paddock, Washington, D.C. consultant and author, said that "members of the human race are on a collision course with environmental disaster." Paddock, co-author of "Hungry Nations" and "Famine—1975," termed the concept that population growth is good for industry is a Trojan horse . . . a sacred cow. "The stork is a buzzard in disguise. Every new citizen he brings is a voracious consumer who must be fed, clothed, housed, transported, entertained and educated. Each represents more than a potential customer. He represents an increase in pollution and a decrease in natural resources."

What about Iowa? Do we have a pollution problem? Earlier this spring the Iowa State University Extension Service held a series of meetings across the state at Davenport, Iowa City, Mason City, Sioux City, Creston and Des Moines. One of the

speakers at these meetings was Ted L. Willich, extension agricultural engineer at Iowa State.

Willich says that air pollution is present in "localized areas" of Iowa. The nature and seriousness of air pollution vary from place-to-place and from hour-to-hour, Iowans, he said, are fortunate in that climatic factors such as wind allow for air pollution dispersal more in Iowa than in many other states. The engineer emphasized that air pollution is a problem in Iowa in spite of such climatic factors. Besides smogs and gases, odorous substances cause pollution in Iowa. Problems resulting from natural odors, such as manures, can be controlled to some degree by zoning regulations, according to Willich.

Pollution problems that result from abuse of surface and groundwater resources are usually local in Iowa. Although groundwater pollution is less publicized than surface water pollution, its potential for causing disease still remains. Iowa municipalities are required to have their water tested frequently. But Willich points out that few privately-owned wells in Iowa are tested—less than one percent actually.

Willich says that man-made openings like drainage wells exist all over Iowa and are contributing to groundwater pollution. Surface water pollution also exists in Iowa, but the health hazards are less severe today than 50 years ago. Willich explains that the state health department has diligently required Iowa's cities and towns to construct sewage treatment plants as necessary to minimize health hazards. As a result, he said, Iowa leads in the nation in adequacy of municipal sewage treatment. Still, he added, improvements can be made.

Willich says that run-off from Iowa's farmland contributes to surface water pollution. The Iowa water pollution control commission has initiated a program to minimize pollution loads from these lands, but has not yet found a way to effectively control water flow over cropland to prevent erosion and the movement of fertile soils into streams.

The Iowa State engineer defines land pollution as involving degradation of the land surface, including the landscape, to the detriment of beneficial use of that area. Says Willich "In this sense, Iowa does have a major problem in addition to soil erosion. A portion of the land pollution problem in Iowa stems from solid waste disposal."

(Continued on page 3)

Poet's Corner..

(Lillian Dirksen, widely-known Sumner poet, has had her works published in national and state poetry publications. She is at present midwest poet laureate of the Chaparral Poetry Society. Her poetry is a weekly feature of the Sumner Gazette)

Where there is no hope there can be no endeavor.—Johnson
In all things it is better to hope than to despair.—Goethe

HOPE IN SUSPENSION

Should April come no more the barren bough
Will reach in vain for bud and leaf and bloom;
The stricken fields will mock the disk and plow,
While children hungering, hide away in gloom.
From out cathedral towers no saucous bell
Will call the keening celebrants to peaywe

While wise men seeking the Lord Emmanuel
Kneel in pained breathing the moriant air.

If April should forget her christening rites
And ride no more in state to give command
For cherub showers to be her acolytes
To free the earth of doubt and contraband . . .

But look! she comes, see on the greening hills
Her chariots wheeling, decked with daffodils!

SOCIAL SECURITY Question Box

If you have questions, address your letters to:
Loydard O. Campbell
Social Security Administration
P.O. Box 1118
525 W. 5th St.
Waterloo, Iowa 50704

Q. I've worked and contributed to social security for 6 years now but still don't understand how the program works. What's the basic idea anyway — just future retirement income?

A. The basic idea of social security is a simple one. During working years (including military service time) you, your employers, and self-employed people pay social security contributions which are pooled in special trust funds. Then, when earnings stop or are reduced because you retire, die, or become disabled, monthly cash benefits are paid from these funds to replace part of your lost earnings.

BACK TO WORK

Douglas A. Barnes, Grinnell, retired vice president of General Telephone of Midwest, left April 17 to work in South Vietnam. Barnes will be helping develop a nationwide civilian telecommunications system in that southeast Asian country for the next nine months.

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In addition, a health insurance program (Medicare) is provided for people 65 or older. Currently, more than 9 out of ten working people in the United States are building protection for themselves and their families under the social security program.

Q. I know social security helps older people, but what about young workers like me? What's in it for us? I'm 28 and see nothing ahead but contributions until I'm 65.

A. Social security provides a great deal of valuable protection for you and other young workers long before you reach retirement age. You, and your family, are protected against loss of income resulting from disability or death. If you should die, your dependents may receive a lump-sum payment and monthly cash benefits.



Roadside litter

The spotlight has been on pollution in recent weeks and one project of several local groups and individuals has been the cleaning up of litter along the rural roads in the area. This is a commendable task, and yet it is a sad commentary on today's living that it is necessary for young people to "clean up" someone else's mess.

Why is it more difficult to bring back an empty container from a ride around the countryside, or from a fishing site or picnic area, than it is to start out with it full? An empty can is no more difficult to handle than a full one, or is it?

Looking at the trout streams of northeast Iowa one can come up with a new definition of a fisherman. He is the person who complains about the effect of pollution on his favorite sport, as he drops another beer can in the stream.

These are the attitudes which have resulted in the littered landscape, someone else's mess, which many of our young people have been busy cleaning up in recent weeks. Perhaps it doesn't seem fair that they should have to do this, even though voluntarily. However, it may be the start of an educational process which could result in a generation more aware of the effect of littering and perhaps just a little more dedicated to keeping our countryside clean.

Letters to the editor

Quite often the publishers of this newspaper are approached by those who have suggestions for editorial comment. These are welcome. However, there are also times when the subject suggested, or the point to be made, may not agree with our editorial views . . . or perhaps the subject matter doesn't arouse us to the point of editorializing.

For that reason this newspaper has maintained a policy of publishing "letters to the editor" whenever they are submitted. There are some stipulations, among them being a name signed to the letter, that the comments not be libelous and the understanding that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the publishers of this newspaper.

So the next time you feel strongly about some matter, take a minute and write a letter to this newspaper, expressing your views. It will be published . . . and it might help bring about a solution to a problem, or at least present a different point of view. We welcome these letters.

Fayette County Home Economist resigns

Mrs. Kathleen Connor, who has served as extension home economist in Fayette County since January 1, 1969, submitted her resignation at the Extension Council meeting Tuesday evening, April 28.

This announcement was made by Lyle Jones, chairman of the Fayette County Extension Council. He added that the resignation will be effective Aug. 1, 1970.

At the Council meeting Mrs. Connor reported that she and her husband, Peter, will be moving to Bloomington, Minn., by June 1. Mrs. Connor has accepted a position transfer to the main office of Donalson Company, Inc., in Bloomington.

The home economist will be traveling back to Fayette County during part of June and July to help complete preparations for

the 4-H County Fair, June reported.

Mrs. Connor has made a fine contribution to the Extension educational program for adults and youth. Her special emphasis in training has been in the area of nutrition.

Looking Around This Week . . .

A comment dropped in a speech can become a part of our everyday language and terminology. That is the case with the words "silent majority" used by President Nixon in one of his reports on the Vietnam War. This term is heard often now, and it gives comfort to the politicians, to our nation's leaders seeking support for their work and decisions. Somehow they feel that those citizens who do not rise up in protest must be silently approving of what is being done.

It seems more that for too many years we have had a "spineless majority." Too many people, too often, have failed not only to protest but have shrugged their shoulders in resignation to the supposed fact that nothing can be done to change the course of events . . . so why bother?

Oh, once in a while this spineless majority rises up in righteous indignation . . . at least a part of the majority . . . and for example, castigates a college professor who included some four-letter words in a test. Indignantly they demand his resignation and enjoy a feeling of concern and back in their new-found protective attitude toward college students exposed to such filth.

On the other hand, they quite apparently meekly accept unwarranted violence on the state's campuses. After all, these are students, perhaps misguided, but young people none-the-less who have the "right" to protest. Instead of demanding that those who aren't interested in education be removed from the campus when they participate in violent "demonstrations" they turn their head.

The spineless majority doesn't want to face up to the fact that they have substituted concern for their own personal and immediate secure little world for the responsibility of concerned citizenship. Through the years they have ignored the growth of the problems which today are being used as the excuse to trigger violence and hate.

the 4-H County Fair, June reported.

Mrs. Connor has made a fine contribution to the Extension educational program for adults and youth. Her special emphasis in training has been in the area of nutrition.

The spineless majority has watched as inequities have been piled on inequities, as our national resources have been squandered to satisfy the demands of our affluent society. Governmental agencies have been multiplied to deal with social problems and have become a problem within themselves . . . demanding even more government . . . and more waste and more taxes and less accomplished.

The spineless majority has been content to allow a selective service system to exist which in effect forces the unqualified into higher educational institutions to escape the obligation of serving in the armed forces. And this majority has found it good because it fits into their theory of personal security . . . even at the expense of others.

In short, too many people too much of the time have let "George do it" and now we are reaping the reward. Today's young people, and most of them are sincere in their denouncement of this nation's apathy towards its problems, are combining the fervor of youth with the always present radical leadership of extremists and are replacing democratic processes with violence.

They have watched as the democratic process has been hobbled by their elders, too interested in their clubs, the stock market, their pleasures to show concern for and attend governmental meetings, vote at elections, or even worry about whether or not their own children are working at school? They have watched and listened as their elders ridiculed the law, whether it be on the highway or at tax time.

Certainly these young people are not completely right. Violence seldom brings any just solution. However, perhaps it is the only way to wake up the spineless majority, to make them demand the changes which will help return our nation to the path from which we have strayed . . . a path which led us to the pinnacle of greatness . . . and from which point we must surely tumble unless we change our attitudes and become, instead of the spineless majority, concerned citizens.

And I will admit to a place in the spineless majority!

