

Doing it naturally

Youthful writer becomes publisher

By MARY CONNELLY-SZCZESNY

Bill Griffith is a bit of an ecological Heloise.

Like that formidable columnist who has offered thousands of household hints to millions of American housewives, Griffith talks to people about their homes, gardens and lifestyles.

At 21, Griffith is a magazine publisher. Every two months, the West Bloomfield resident churns out "Doing More with Less," subtitled "How to get control of your life and environment."

But Griffith does not spend hours every week at his Birmingham office writing theoretical essays on ecology and conservation.

Instead, his year-old publication tells people how to cut water bills when showering or washing dishes, how to monitor electric meters, how to cook garden vegetables in new ways, how to fix drippy faucets or how to toss a "pollution party."

Looking at his 14-20 page publication, complete with cartoons, suggested reading lists, letters to the editor and "tips" column, Griffith says within six years the magazine will be proudly next to "Esquire" and "Good

Housekeeping" at drugstores around the country.

RIGHT NOW Griffith says the publication's 300-350 subscribers are mostly 25 to 40 years old.

"Mainly it's for people who are interested in the environment and want to know what they can do about it," Griffith said.

"None of the books I had read gave practical solutions to problems. It was all at a governmental level. The articles all started with 'they should,' not 'we should.'"

Tips abound not only in the magazine but in letters from the readers.

One West Bloomfield woman, for example, wrote to say that by collecting distilled water from her dehumidifier, she was able to supply irons and car batteries year round.

Bloomfield Hills resident Arlene Victor wrote that she sends meat trays and other items to the elementary school art teacher for recycling.

Birmingham resident Nancy Johnson offered advice for cooking wild spinach and milk weed pods found growing freely in yards or fields.

Even Helen Milliken, wife of Michigan's governor, dropped a line to sug-

gest that others try her trick of carrying large canvas boat bags to the grocery store to eliminate use of brown paper bags.

"MOST OF the readers are over 30," Griffith said. "They're the people who have to support families and who see it's going to be a little harder in years to come than it used to."

Griffith maintains that the ecology movement has moved from a sense of global-consciousness in the 60s to a new awareness of what might be done on an individual basis.

"In the '60s, people had to save the world. Now people are looking more toward their own interests."

The readers are practical people. They're not idealists who want to close down a whole plant that's polluting a river.

"I don't get letters from people saying we must bomb Dow Chemical or stuff like that."

GRIFFITH, WHO left Kalamazoo College after two years to devote all his time to the publication, works full-time at the job. Several other people offer part-time help.

Griffith said he is trying to encourage people to make changes in their lifestyle and will only publish things which have already been tested or put

into use.

When Griffith decided to do a story on fixing leaky faucets to conserve water, for example, he sought step-by-step instructions from a plumber and then tested them on three faucets. The resulting article included numbered steps and drawings to guide the reader through the process.

Recipes for garden vegetable growers are also tested, he said.

PAST ISSUES offer a smattering of information on "good water habits," "Planning your garden," solar window boxes, composting and getting better gas mileage.

Readers learn, for example, that if you stick a piece of tape on the wall behind shower handles to mark preferred temperature settings, 45 seconds' worth of water will be saved since you don't have to adjust the settings.

Or that instead of running water for several minutes for a cold drink, homeowners can save water by keeping a pitcher of water chilled in the refrigerator.

Griffith's publication is written, edited and composed at Common Ground, 1090 S. Adams, Birmingham. The multi-service agency offered to help Griffith about a month ago.



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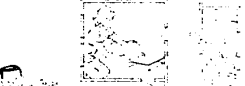
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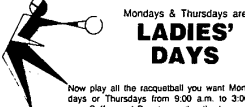


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Mother Goofs always likes to be fair.

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399 should lessen the pain.

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What will you go for?
Your brown and white print is the end.
Was 1349,
Wasn't selling so fine;
For 669, we figure you'll bend.

Thayer-Coggin made a Lounge Chair.
With an Aztec design.
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But 219 should do fine.

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