

Environmentalist tallies up consumer victories

By KATHLEEN MORAN
Editor

Grace Gluskin has great faith in the power of the consumer.

And it's no wonder. In her eight years as executive director of Concern Inc. Detroit, Mrs. Gluskin has seen people become more aware and better educated on environmental and ecological issues. In the last decade, the public has become a force to reckon with on environmental concerns, she believes.

She has only to point to three issues to prove her point: the appearance of no- or low-phosphate detergents on grocery shelves, elimination of freon-propelled aerosols and implementation of a returnable bottle law.

"What we're doing is creating a market for non-pollutants," she said from her cubbyhole office in One Northfield Plaza in Troy.

"Nobody went out of business when people demanded and alternative to phosphate detergents. Now you can buy no-phosphate or low-phosphate detergents and the water quality of the Great Lakes has improved."

"I think that's the law of supply and demand and it works very well."

The same happened with the public uprising against products using freon. Manufacturers found alternatives. When the public was tired of dealing with the state Legislature to enact a returnable bottle law, it resorted to a referendum and voted in the law by a 2-1 margin. "You can look to gov-



Grace Gluskin hopes consumers and environmentalists won't have to spend the next few years fighting to hold onto the gains they've made in the last decade.

ernment for just so much. After all, who indeed is government? We are."

MRS. GLUSKIN stumbled into her career in environmental causes in the

late 1960s when she went to a program on issues like water and air pollution. The program was sponsored by Citizens for Survival which, ironically, didn't survive. After three or four years of tackling such issues like open burning and of giving slide presentations on environmental problems, the all-volunteer organization disbanded.

Mrs. Gluskin, whose formal education is in English, formed the citizen ad hoc committee on environmental matters before being hired as Concern's only paid, part-time employee.

The Washington-based Concern distributes literature on environmental issues, has a speaker's bureau, conducts an annual conference and has produced three mini-films with accompanying study guides for use by local schools and organizations.

Among its fund-raising items is a children's cookbook entitled "This Can't Be Healthy, I Like It" which is now in its third printing. A second cookbook, entitled "I am not a Vegetarian," featuring vegetarian recipes for meat eaters, will be published next week. Both sell for \$4.25 plus taxes and postage.

Sending out the cookbooks and answering requests for fact sheets and environmental literature consumes part of Mrs. Gluskin's time. She also answers questions from consumers through her Consumer Mailbag column in the Eclectic newspapers.

But giving speeches, coordinating the efforts of 50 volunteers and initi-

ating new projects, like producing the mini-films, take up most of her time.

At a time when volunteer groups are losing members as more people enter the work force, Concern hasn't been affected. The organization has "staying power," boasts Mrs. Gluskin who touts it as a way to get involved in meaningful issues and eventually obtain employment in the field. "We're always attracting new people and they seem to like to stay," she said.

The solid support of volunteers is the major reason why Concern is still around and constantly growing. "Every year we serve a broader segment of the community," she said.

The Eco-tips prepared in Concern's Washington office to address issues attest to the fact that consumers are better educated about environmental issues today. The first fact sheet printed in 1971 was a single sheet addressing four topics. The most recent one was eight sheets, addressing one topic.

It shows that "education works," she believes.

JUST WHAT THE next decade holds, Mrs. Gluskin can't predict. She does believe the focus will shift from the "known" issues like water and air pollution to the "unknowns" like toxic wastes.

Although basically an optimist who has great faith in the power of individuals, she is concerned that the drive to cut government waste and

reduce spending will force environmentalists to devote most of their time fighting to hold onto the gains they have made to date.

"Economics seem to speak very loudly in this country," said the mother of three. "If we're not careful, there could be some reversals."

She fears being "handcuffed" by having the necessary laws but not having the money to implement them.

"I'm concerned that we will use so

much energy trying to protect what has already been done that we won't have the energy to move forward into the areas we should get involved in next."

But her faith in the determination of individuals to keep standing up for environmental concerns is undaunted. "You have to be optimistic, otherwise why bother? We have made some great strides and people realize now they can't take their environment for granted."

Youth ski lessons set for January

Students, fourth grade through high school, can enroll in a downhill ski program through Dec. 10.

Registration for all sessions can be made at the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department, 31555 Eleven Mile or by mail with registration forms distributed at area elementary, middle and high schools. Students in both the Clarenceville and Farmington School Districts may apply.

Middle and high school session I will be on Tuesdays, Jan. 6, 13 and 20. Session II will be February 6 and 13.

Fourth and fifth grade session I will be Jan. 9, 16 and 23. Session II will be Feb. 6 and 13.

Cost is \$23.50 for session I and \$19 for session II. An additional \$5 fee will be collected each week for those renting equipment.

Bus pick up for middle and high school students will be at East Middle School, Duncel Middle School, North Farmington High School and the Orchard Ridge campus.

Fourth and fifth grade bus pick up will be at Our Lady of Sorrows elementary school and Orchard Ridge.

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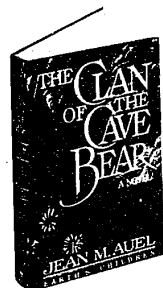
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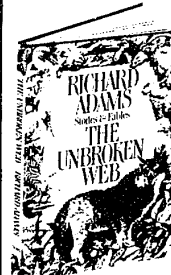
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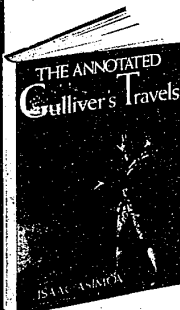
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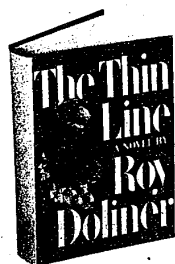
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